

# **Horizon**

**A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART**

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**AN AMERICAN VIEW**

*by* CLEMENT GREENBERG

**NOTES ON CIVILIANS AT BAY**

*by* BRIAN HOWARD

**FOUR SPANISH WAR POSTERS**

**A LOOK AT THE WORST**

*by* STEPHEN SPENDER

**THE CAP AND THE BANTAM**

*by* ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL

**RUDYARD KIPLING**

*by* HUGH KINGSMILL

**POEMS** *by* C. DAY LEWIS, JOHN BETJEMAN, RUTHVEN TODD,  
W. R. RODGERS *and* STEPHEN SPENDER

**REVIEWS** *by* GEORGE ORWELL *and* LILLIAN BROWSE

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***Edited by Cyril Connolly***

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# HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

*Vol. II. No. 9. September 1940*

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# CLEMENT GREENBERG

## AN AMERICAN VIEW

*[This article is replied to in the current COMMENT]*

ONE important reason for the reluctance of the British and French ruling classes to go to war with Nazi Germany was the realization that in order to go all out in such a war they would have to proclaim an anti-fascist crusade, an 'ideological' war, than which there is nothing more repellent to the leaders of the bourgeois democracies. From the point of view of their own class interests they are right. For a capitalist country to raise anti-fascist slogans during a war is to play with fire: slogans require a positive as well as a negative content; anti-fascist slogans, when they have any real drive to them begin to suggest too much that is antithetical to capitalism no less than to fascism: such things as social and economic democracy, mass participation in the guidance of the nation, integral freedom of speech and action, etc. The heat of war would force these slogans from the realms of the safely abstract into the regions of the dangerously concrete. Rather than gamble with this danger, the rulers of Great Britain and France preferred to gamble with what was for them a lesser danger, defeat at the hands of Hitler. Instead of declaring war against a principle and a system, they declared it against a personality and a people. Instead of blaming the war upon fascism, they blamed it, once more, upon a people. In books and magazines the 'problem' of Germany—how the corpse was to be disposed of after the kill—was discussed, but very little was said about the problem of fascism. They named the enemy by his family name, they docketed his ancestry and personal habits, but they were very careful not to permit him to stand for anything except the broadest abstractions such as injustice, tyranny, totalitarianism and so forth. By skipping back and forth between the very general and the very particular one manages to avoid dangerous topics.

Despite some vague talk about a European federation and the elimination of international injustices, we were given to understand that Hitler must be destroyed in order to restore the *status*



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*quo*. But the masses in Britain and France are not satisfied enough with the *status quo* to die for it. Not having experienced a Versailles treaty in the recent past, the prospect of losing the war does not terrify them as much as it does the Germans; and having experienced the disillusion of victory, they expect much less from one than do the Germans. The French workers, moreover, were in retreat when the war broke out. All they had won in 1936 had been taken away from them, and they saw relatively little left to defend against Hitler—not even ‘national honour’; especially when those who mouthed the phrase most sold it shortest. Yes, for the French, at any rate, the fatherland idea had lost its credit; it couldn’t even buy xenophobia, much less fighting spirit. Only a sincere anti-fascist programme could have done that.

The strategical and tactical mistakes made by the Allied rulers are but the reflection of their refusal to face the historical situation squarely. Military methods flow from political ones. The defence of the *status quo* of 1918 constrains the British and French to the strategy and tactics of 1918. Hitler’s revolutionary methods of warfare derive from his revolutionary political methods—albeit these methods are revolutionary only in the sense that they are new ways of preserving capitalism. Hitler realizes this much: that in order to keep capitalism there must be fascism; Trotsky realizes that in order to keep democracy there must be a socialist revolution. We cannot stand still. We can only keep what we value by adding to it. To preserve, we must change; to meet the attrition of time, we must launch our own offensives. As Goethe says: ‘Nur der die Freiheit sich verdient, der täglich sie erobern muss.’ Only he earns freedom who must win it daily.

The war no longer permits any straddling. There is not enough room left for that. We must choose: either capitalism or democracy. One or the other must go. If we insist on keeping capitalism then we cannot fight Hitler. He must win. This is the dilemma which faces British and French capitalism and prevents it from fighting the war wholeheartedly. This is why it does not dare to launch anti-fascist slogans. The fate of the profit system is in charge of the enemy. It is no longer a question pure and simple of a redistribution of imperialist loot as it was in 1914, when the Kaiser stood substantially for the same thing as Clemenceau. History never repeats itself that prettily. To-day only German economic and military might can assure a capitalist Europe. An Allied



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victory would but weaken the power to survive of capitalism, for, as Trotsky says, Great Britain and France no longer have the specific economic gravity to dominate Europe. They have done so since the last war only by maintaining at the expense of Central and Eastern Europe a forced and unnatural equilibrium fraught with great dangers for capitalism as a whole in that it created revolutionary situations. (Stalin's Comintern can be thanked for the fact that none of them were taken advantage of.) If Europe is to remain capitalist, then, it must become fascist, and if it becomes fascist it must submit to Germany, for, as I have said, only German arms and the German economy have both the will and the capacity to police Europe for fascism. Fascist Britain and fascist France can no more escape becoming satellites of Germany than Italy and Spain have. The Battle of the Meuse and the demoralization of their own officer cadres—which were themselves rotten with fascists and flirts with fascism—suffice to convince the French capitalists of what a good many of them had already suspected: that the only way out for them is submission to Hitler. To delay will be too expensive. And by climbing aboard Hitler's bandwagon in time they hope to win his leniency. When the interests of capitalism as a whole system come in conflict with those of national policy, capitalists will always decide sooner or later in favour of the former. The case of Spain proves that. And since the rise of Hitler-fascism the national policies of the British and French could not be aligned effectively with those of world capitalism, which can no longer allow itself the illusions of colonial luxury, labour aristocracies and democracy. British capitalism is reluctant to admit, and it has every reason to be, that its salvation lies with Hitler. And in this reluctance lies a danger to itself, of which we must take advantage. For if it does not capitulate to Hitler in time, there will be a revolution in Britain led by the only element in British society that means to fight Hitler in earnest, the working class. But the problem is not to postpone the capitulation: it is how to make effective as immediately as possible the demand that the working class be given control of the conduct of the war against Hitler.

The very fact of a socialist Britain would knock two wheels out from under Hitler's cart. As long as Britain fights under a Churchill and a Duff Cooper the German masses will remain solidly united behind the Nazis. They well know that all they can expect from



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Hitler's defeat at such hands is a second and worse Versailles. This fear has converted many a German from an anti- to a pro-Nazi. Without this fear the Nazis would have hardly any more moral reserves at their command than the erstwhile Allies, allowance made for the initial victories. The bright future of plunder which Hitler promises his people only convinces the adolescents.

The dubious future of a federated *capitalist* Europe convinces no one. The only future which offers any hope and any credibility to the masses is that of socialism. But it is a future they cannot take on promise. They must make it for themselves. And the first step in that direction is to take upon themselves the task of eliminating Hitler. Over here in America the problem is the same, almost exactly the same.

A socialist revolution in the West would send an answering thrill through the German workers. It would come with idealism and sincerity; it would invite the world to join it in fraternity and love—yes, *love*. It would not be Stalin, it would not be tangled up with the barbarism, accidental to itself, of a backward country. It would have difficulties of its own, no doubt, blood, unpleasantness—for every step forward in history involves tragedy—but *it would come to a world that is ready for it*.

## COMMENT

THE article which precedes this, *An American View*, is written by Clement Greenberg, who is a Trotskyite. It represents in extreme form a point of view that is constantly expressed by the English Left—by the *New Statesman*, *Daily Mirror*, *News Chronicle*, etc. Being put in such simple and violent terms, and from so far away, it enables the force of the argument to be judged with clarity. It is obvious that this view, which is widely held, rests on an over-simplification of the facts, and if put into practice would lead to disaster. For the weak point in the judgment of intellectuals is that they tend to be right about the course of events, but wrong about their tempo. They over-simplify, expect everything to happen too fast, because they do not allow for the time-lag of human affairs, the gap between thought and action, thrust and parry. Clement Greenberg has

over-simplified the structure of English society, the nature of the present war and the forces engaged in it: his argument is (1) only the working-classes can defeat Hitler; (2) England is ruled by the capitalist class, therefore England will be defeated, either through weakness or treachery, since the capitalist class is on Hitler's side; (3) therefore the working-class must take power and conduct the war themselves. He cites Spain as an example.

There is some truth in this—in fact it is ultimately true, as *Horizon* has put it, that 'the only thing which can defeat National Socialism is International Socialism'—but it is a foreshortening of truth to assume that Hitler himself can be defeated by anything except force of arms and the people who use them, in fact by the army, the navy and the air force.

These bodies are democratic, but not socialist, and at the top they are not democratic but show a tendency towards military dictatorship with an inclination to lock up artists and foreigners and to put the whole country under martial law. They accept Churchill as a leader; it is debatable whether they would fight better under Tom Wintringham—and without them the war cannot be won. They are even extremely patriotic because they do not think in terms of Marxist economics, but act from the profound English instinct which tells us when a continental power has become too strong, and when the strategic independence of our islands is threatened. Such instincts are ignored by Marxist calculators. What is the real class picture of England? At the top is a ruling class of great capitalists and landlords—some of these may be potentially pro-Hitler; below them come the enormous professional and commercial middle-class, which, though capitalist, could easily adapt itself to socialism, and which is morally and geographically anti-Hitler, because it believes in Democracy, Christianity and the British Empire. To ignore this class, which provides ninety per cent. of the officers of the services and the executives of the war effort, or to propose to sacrifice it to the revolutionary necessities of Marxism, is to make an appalling blunder, for an attempt to socialize it in a hurry would drive it into Fascism. Lastly comes the great working-class, which is anti-Hitler, but quite incapable of defeating him without the collaboration of the other. The importance of Churchill is that he is the leader of both the



fighting forces and the middle-class, and he is, as such, accepted by the working-classes. No other leader could retain the confidence of all three. It is because England is united at the moment that Hitler is not already here, and the sacrifice has been purchased with the lowest possible sacrifice of any one class or community. The only steps which can now be taken without disrupting that unity are increased taxation of the rich, and the removal from office of the men of Munich. To increase the power of the workers at the expense of the middle-class who officer them would be fatal.

One more point. Spain. Anyone would think from the way the Spanish Government is constantly referred to that they had won their war, not lost it; and one of the reasons they lost it was that the Navy shot their officers, and were consequently unable to navigate their ships and therefore to prevent Franco from bringing his Moors and Foreign Legion over from Africa. A People's Admiralty and a Peoples' General Staff are doubtful blessings. What we can learn from Spain is the danger of too much insistence on ideologies in wartime. The Anarchists could have got to Saragossa on the petrol they used in burning churches, the Communists hated Trotsky more than Franco, Anarchists and Socialists split and resplit like streptococci, and the instinctive units of that geographical entity, the young republic in arms, was destroyed. Madrid fought that Barcelona might have a revolution for Valencia to put down.

What we can learn from Spain, too, is the essential vigour of a country which believes in democracy, and really fights for it. The Spanish Republic had a very small middle-class, the struggle was between a working-class that had just achieved liberty, independence and some culture, and the land-owners, capitalists and generals who opposed it. The Republic was a democracy, not a plutocracy, the issue was as clear cut as at Marathon. This is revealed in their propaganda, which is full of certainty, not only certainty about war-aims, but certainty as to the kind of people to whom they appealed. In this number we reproduce four Spanish posters as a comment on the inadequacy of our own. They assume a high level of taste and intelligence in their audience; the drawings of Puyol and Mattéos make no concessions, *Los Nacionales* is not obvious satire, and the familiar air-raid poster is not afraid of encouraging

defeatism by presenting facts. It is doubtful whether the Spanish public had the taste and intelligence which the artists presumed; what is important is that they wanted to have it, that they believed in taste and intelligence, that they worshipped education, and that to them an artist or a professor was not a suspect high-brow, but someone more admirable than themselves. In England this is not the case. Our posters reflect confusion about our war-aims, suspicion about our artists, and ignorance about our public.

Posters in wartime are of extreme importance. They clarify opinion and crystallize feeling, they are the leading articles which nobody can skip. At present none of ours come up to the standard of Guinness or Shell, nor will they until our artists are encouraged to put all their inspiration into a statement of what we are fighting for. If the Ministry of Information does not provide that encouragement it could be given by competitions organized by the *Daily Express* or *Picture Post*. An Elizabethan called war the 'Great Corrector of Enormous Times'. We all know the times are enormous, we can correct them ourselves, if we have the courage and lucidity to perfect the aims which will unite and seduce, or we can drift along until they are corrected for us.



STEPHEN SPENDER

# THE AIR RAID ACROSS THE BAY

Above the dead flat plane of sea  
And watching rocks of coast,  
Across the bay, the high  
Searchlights push to the centre of sky  
Rubbing white rules through dull lead,  
Projecting enormous phantom  
Masts with swaying derricks,  
Sliding triangles and parallels  
Upon the abased wasted distances.

But through the shifting luminous figures  
A black ragged horizontal sound  
Moves, trailed by one distraught beam.

A thudding falls from remote cones  
And pink sequins wink from a gauze screen.

Seeds of killing drop on cells of sleep  
Which hug these promontories like little shells.

Fingers pick away  
Human minds from human brains.

O man-made and inhuman god,  
The shining ladders slant  
Up to your heaven packed with more  
Evil invention than all holy wisdom  
Accumulated in history.  
Your infatuated dervishes try  
To tear out of each others' entrails  
The bread and gold which mocking lie  
All round them in the pregnant peaceful fields  
And loaded under rocks.

# NOTES ON POSTERS OF THE SPANISH REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT

SOME of the posters made by the Republican Government of Spain are now being exhibited at Marx House. The number and high artistic and technical quality of the posters is very remarkable considering the appalling difficulties—ceaseless bombardment and shortage of every kind—under which they were made.

I had great difficulty in collecting these posters, which were issued not only by the Ministry of Propaganda but also by the offices of the numerous political parties and government services. However, *because of* rather than *in spite of* my being a foreigner special consideration was paid to me.

None of the posters show the attitude of 'playing down' to the people in order not to be 'above their heads'. Simple people only make fun of posters made to play down to them, and think the person responsible simple-minded himself.

Puyol's *Rumour* was particularly successful in one of a series of ten posters representing war types—the optimist beating a big drum through which a shell is crashing, the pessimist seeing all upside down through distorting binoculars, the very alarmed and despondent newspaper addict, the amateur strategist (perhaps the worst bore of all!), the false politician who seems to be ardently democratic but who really has reactionary feelings at heart and one leg rooted in Fascism itself, the food profiteer and the food hoarder. Rather obscure, perhaps, is the 'ivory tower' type of citizen with ears corked up, eyes blindfolded and mouth padlocked although flood and fire surround him.

Francisco Matteo's 'Siege of Madrid' is a set of ten lithographs sold cheaply in bookshops. They form a pageant; nightmarish, witty, and full of bitter, strong feeling. The artistry is so elaborate that details hide within each other—battered Nazi troops carry a flag with the words 'Mein Kampf' written upon it, their feet are webbed like those of frogs and their hands distorted. In another, a machine gun protrudes from a religious banner surrounded by evil and lunatic priests.

After nearly a year of war we have produced no remarkable posters and the sociological and political level of those which we have remains much the same as that of twenty-five years ago.

At the beginning of the war I offered to send or take, at any suitable time, some of these posters to the Ministry of Information. I described them as beautifully made, and for the most part unpolitical. In the polite official reply no interest was shown in my offer.

JOHN BANTING

C. DAY LEWIS

## DEDICATORY STANZAS

FOR A TRANSLATION OF THE GEORGICS

(TO STEPHEN SPENDER)

Poets are not in much demand these days—  
We're red, it seems, or cracked, or bribed, or hearty  
And, if invited, apt to spoil the party  
With the oblique reproach of emigrés:  
We cut no ice, although we're fancy skaters:  
Aiming at art, we only strike the arty.  
Poetry now, the kinder tell us, caters  
For an élite: still, it gives us the hump  
To think that we're the unacknowledged rump  
Of a long parliament of legislators.

Where are the war poets? the fools inquire.  
We were the prophets of a changeable morning  
Who hoped for much but saw the clouds forewarning:  
We were at war, while they still played with fire  
And rigged the market for the ruin of man:  
Spain was a death to us, Munich a mourning.  
No wonder then if, like the pelican,  
We have turned inward for our iron ration,  
Tapping the vein and sole reserve of passion,  
Drawing from poetry's capital what we can.

Yes, we shall fight, but—let them not mistake it—  
Not for the ones who grudged to peace their pence  
And gave war a blank cheque in self-defence,  
Nor those who take self-interest and fake it  
Into a code of honour—the distorting  
Mirror those magnates hold to experience.  
It's for dear life alone we shall be fighting,  
The poet's living-space, the love of men,  
And poets must speak for common suffering men  
While history in sheets of fire is writing.



Meanwhile, what touches the heart at all, engrosses.  
Through the flushed springtime and the fading year  
I lived on country matters. Now June was here  
Again, and brought the smell of flowering grasses  
To me and death to many overseas:  
They lie in the flowering sunshine, flesh once dear  
To some, now parchment for the heart's release.  
Soon enough each is called into the quarrel.  
Till then, taking a leaf from Virgil's laurel,  
I sang in time of war the arts of peace.

Virgil—a tall man, dark and countrified  
In looks, they say: retiring: no rhetorician:  
Of humble birth: a Celt, whose first ambition  
Was to be a philosopher: Dante's guide.  
But chiefly dear for his gift to understand  
Earth's intricate, ordered heart, and for a vision  
That saw beyond an imperial day the hand  
Of man no longer armed against his fellow,  
But all for vine and cattle, fruit and fallow,  
Subduing with love's positive force the land.

Different from his our age and myths, our toil  
The same. Our exile and extravagances,  
Revolt, retreat, fine faiths, disordered fancies  
Are but the poet's search for a right soil  
Where words may settle, marry, and conceive an  
Imagined truth, for a regimen that enhances  
Their natural grace. Now, as to one whom even  
Our age's drought and spate have not deterred  
From cherishing, like a bud of flame, the word,  
I dedicate this book to you, dear Stephen.

Now, when war's long midwinter seems to freeze us  
And numb our living sources once for all,  
That veteran of Virgil's I recall  
Who made a kitchen-garden by the Galaesus  
On derelict land, and got the first of spring  
From airs and buds, the first fruits in the fall.

And lived at peace there, happy as a king.  
Naming him for good luck, I see man's native  
Stock is perennial, and our creative  
Winged seed can strike a root in anything.

*JOHN BETJEMAN*

## THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL PICNIC

In this high pasturage, the Blunden time,  
With Lady's Finger, Smokewort, Lovers' Loss,  
And lin-lan-lone a Tennysonian chime  
Stirring the sorrel and the gold-starred moss,  
Cool is the chancel, bright the Altar cross.

Drink, Mary, drink your fizzy lemonade  
And leave the king-cups. Take your grey felt hat;  
Here, where the low side window lends a shade,  
There, where the key lies underneath the mat  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sat.

Sweet smell of cerements and cold wet stones,  
Hassock and cassock, paraffin and pew,  
Green in a light which that sublime Burne-Jones  
White-hot and wondering from the glass kiln drew  
Gleams and re-gleams this Trans arcade anew.

So stand you waiting, freckled innocence!  
For me the squinch and squint and Trans arcade:  
For you, where meadow grass is evidence  
With flattened pattern by our picnic made,  
One bottle more of fizzy lemonade.

BRIAN HOWARD

## NOTES ON CIVILIANS AT BAY

### *Dedication*

Now that you are no longer dead, or handed over to the Gestapo (as the whole Stadium-full of refugees was personally delivered to the Gestapo by the French officials in Paris, like a victory-present), I want to make some notes on the last miserable days in France. For you, for me, and for anyone who would like a few hints on the feel of a time when ordinary people (like my French friends) as well as the ordinarily persecuted (like you) are being betrayed. I have lived through a little two-month period when a great many of the most disagreeable and most powerful kinds of energy not only seemed to give up, but really did give up fighting one another, in order to concentrate on their true enemy—on the political refugees, the poor, the intellectuals, the religious, the misfits, the old, the ill, the simple, the thoughtful-minded. The civilians.

Since, I have been looking through the huge residue of our year of pain, waste, and frustration—permits, bills, letters to Ministries, letters from concentration camps—and I see that, before beginning, I must give vent to one cry of rage. This lump of untidy paper, and, above all, the letters from the concentration camps, yours and others, fills the whole room in which I am sitting with such a violent sensation of *useless* unhappiness, that my heart beats so hard I can scarcely write.

Who, who is going to be punished for all this? The answer is, no one. Then, will people learn from it? Will it teach people to behave better, to exercise power less dangerously, less readily, and to inflict less futile, undeserved pain? Yes. But at the same *rate* of learning as before. Not one smile an hour faster. That is what is terrible. And what is supremely terrible is that a lot of the pain will teach no one anything, least of all those who suffer it. Because they had learned it before: they had set their example of suffering before. This is what I cry out against most.

I am going to quote you some of the last letter I shall possibly



ever receive from K. You know how he and Hilde hated the Nazis. You know he was nearly seventy, penniless, extremely feeble, and a sensitive, talented artist. He was a naturalized Pole, and his sons, B., the brilliant painter, and young K., the writer on philosophy, were French, and in the French Army. Hilde looked after him, and Hilde's poems were appearing in *Mass und Wert*, the leading German anti-Nazi monthly. You know how long they had been in S. and that Hilde was also ill, and on a rigid régime. Well, she had not been naturalized, and at the end of May the French put all the women of German origin in camps. It was the only thing they could think of left to do, I suppose.

16 juin.

'Mon cher Brian,

. . . Ces lenteurs de correspondance sont bien pénibles dans ces jours tragiques; quant à mes douleurs privées je dois dire que presque chaque courrier, me transmettant des nouvelles de Hilde (toujours en retard, toujours trop tard), augmente mes soucis pour elle . . . et pendant que je lui écrivais encore, survient indirectement la nouvelle que tout ce monde est subitement parti, envoyé aux Basses Pyrénées, croit-on—où? Et quand saurai-je de nouveau, ce qu'elle est devenue, dans quel état elle peut se trouver, après un voyage sans doute long, compliqué, exténuant—j'en suis malade et triste à mourir. Et je suis coupé des miens, ne recevant plus de nouvelles, ignorant tout du sort de mes fils et de mon cher Paris, occupé, paraît-il, par ces monstres infâmes . . . Parlez-moi aussi de vous et dites-moi, si vous comptez passer chez moi, avant votre départ. Hilde avait reçu un mot de votre part ("enfin la voix d'un ami" m'a-t-elle écrit) tandis que tout ce que je lui écrivais n'arrivait pas à temps! C'est comme ensorcelé! Et presque je me fais honte de parler de mes calamités personnelles, cependant que des millions d'êtres sont dans des situations impossibles; je maudis mon impotence physique qui fait de moi un cadavre vivant. Croyez-moi, cher ami, j'en suis convaincu, maintenant comme avant, malgré ces adversités, tout cela changera, le moment donné par le destin; *impavidum feriant ruinae!*—verrai-je moi-même encore ce jour, pourrai-je tenir jusque-là, ça c'est une question à part. Peut-être survit en moi un peu de ce qu'était ma vieille race;

hélas, rien de leur force; pourtant je murmure, moi aussi, "jeszce polska nie szigineta". Je le pense pour nous tous, du fond de mon accablement—Bonne poignée de main, votre vieux K. Ce dimanche soir—16 juin.'

What do you think of that? What do you think of a time when *the whole of Europe has begun to write letters like that?* The end of this wise, saintly man's life is being rendered insupportable, and hardly anyone will know, and *no one will profit*. This is what I cannot put up with. The forces of evil, led by Hitler, and abetted everywhere, are torturing, first of all, people such as these. Moreover, the evil forces use the good forces, often, to do it with. This is what has finally wrenched my detachment from me. Perhaps I have said enough.

I don't know exactly where you are, or if you will survive. If you do, you will one day know that from July onwards, I began to fight the subhumanity which is doing these things—making K. write such letters—with *all* my strength. I first began attacking Hitler, for instance, when people in England knew nothing about him. Then I attacked him through the period when they were admiringly curious about him; then, through the period when they were bored with him. Next thing they knew, he was at their throats. But never did I fight systematically; wholly. I just talked, and wrote a few articles, and helped a few refugees. I never really *fought*. I now utterly dedicate myself to this struggle. In the name of your escape to Africa, which you always longed to see. On behalf of K.; on behalf of the civilians. On behalf of the innocent. That is my Dedication to you.

Lastly, some verses by someone we love, and who loves us both.

In spite of the truth of this:

'The consul banged the table and said:

"If you've got no passport you're officially dead":

But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.'

And this:

'Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;

Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:

Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

And this:

'Intellectual disgrace  
Stares from every human face,  
And the seas of pity lie  
Locked and frozen in each eye.'

I still believe in this:

'In the deserts of the heart  
Let the healing fountain start,  
In the prison of his days  
Teach the free man how to praise.'

### Notes

As soon as I got well I left the clinic in Bandol, and went to Le Rayol. It was May, and the seeping advance in the North had begun, but in the South, in Le Rayol, with nothing but the motionless, aromatic bay, with no village even, there was, superficially, no war. Nothing but brightness outside, and the blackness in one's head. I was getting ready to go to England. Things changed on the morning of the 3rd of June, I think. I was standing by the dark, sparkling sea, which was like a face that had lost its meaning when three bombers passed slowly over me, very low, in the direction of Le Lavandou. I noticed they had no markings, and thought how clever of the French it was, and how well protected the coast must be. As the bombers passed Cap Nègre I was astonished to see three giant fountains rise out of the sea, and languidly fall back into it again. The war had arrived in sight.

When I think it all over, I see that the root of the trouble in France was that there was no news. The radio was managed by idiots apparently for idiots, and the papers were little better. The German and Italian kind of controlled press (such a press as France is now getting) at least excites its readers a little. In France the press was censored into nothingness. The papers did not mislead, particularly; they were just filled with nothing. There was *L'Ordre*, the daily (always too late) from Paris, and *La Lumière*, the weekly: these had well-reasoned, honest articles, but no news either. There was *Paris-Soir*, with, sometimes, amusing rubbishy scandal about Hitler. But also no news. It was so bad that when the English papers arrived, it didn't seem



to matter about their being ten days, or two weeks late. Frenchmen pored and puzzled in the cafés over one's old *News Chronicle* or *Daily Express*, and questioned one, gravely. The *Statesman* was like a solid meal to a starving man, except for certain articles on France. And that brings me to the point, the great point. Why did France collapse?

France collapsed for two main reasons. Firstly, because the whole Left was gradually made impotent, and this disgusted the Army; in other words, the most dynamic and watchful part of the electorate. Secondly, the mad Censorship. The extreme Right, e.g. the Fifth Column and the Money Men, were getting absolute control (everyone sensed this, whether they sensed it dimly or clearly) and yet no one knew quite how, or why, because it was impossible to find out anything whatsoever. Their getting this control either angered or at least gave a vague but deep sense of dissatisfaction to most French people. The rest simply remained sunk in their hysteria or indifference.

The things that did not *cause* the French collapse were Leopold's defection; Gamelin's incredible tactical errors; Weygand's coming too late; Germany's superior mechanical methods, etc., etc. Shattering though these things were, a stand could, for example, have been made at two points in Central France, one above Bordeaux, and one hinging on Switzerland. But then, stands are made with hearts—Tommy-guns only help. And the hearts had gone. So, instead, retreats took place everywhere, even into the trap of Brittany. These retreats had, as their underlying causes, the two great sins I have mentioned, which were really one and the same sin, because panic lack of trust (Panic Censorship) is one of the chief, guiding characteristics of Money Men. If one puts one's possessions first of everything, it is quite natural to distrust; to want to muzzle your indignant dependents; to want to strike a bargain with the enemy if only they'll let you keep something. All this had been ripening in France since 1936. And the tag about one's not being able to fool all of the people all of the time always shows results in France first. It always has. There came a time, May-June, when the French *man* decided that things weren't good enough. He wasn't a traitor. I don't believe many officers were traitors. Matters had simply become too puzzling, too gloomy. Orders filtered down from the Money Men not to shoot at the enemy, for instance, lest it

provoke them. I heard this myself from an officer who had been at the front. So large numbers of Frenchmen simply began to go home. Who shall blame them? If you are selfish enough, and secretive enough, and you blunder enough, you can take the heart out of an army with the greatest of ease. Particularly, I repeat, with Frenchmen, who are inclined to be adult, and on the spot.

Finally, this is why I disliked certain articles in the *Statesman*. If they didn't praise, they made excuses for the 'strong-arm' methods used against the French Left. All the French Government had to do, in fact, was behave sensibly, as the English Government has done, hitherto. And if we start the same game here, the end will be the same. It is no good saying that 'conditions' here are 'different'. This 'condition' is not different, ever, anywhere.

It had been at the end of May when I went to tea with a not unintelligent Russian woman and the Baronne de V. The latter was quite a friend of mine; she genuinely liked music, and painted slight, but fresh, little landscapes. The Nazis were near Paris, at Vernon, and the suspense was severe. At tea, the conversation so shocked me that I protested, but I am sure it was the *bien-pensant* conversation of all France at that moment:

They: 'Ce salaud! on doit le fusiller!'

I: 'Qui?'

They: 'Blum, cher ami. *Blum*, naturellement. Thorez aussi. J'en suis sûre que c'est lui qui donne les discours sur le radio allemand.'

I: 'Fusiller Blum?'

They: 'Mais sur le champ! C'est épouvantable. Il a volé tout l'argent que nous avons donné pour la ligne Maginot. Voilà pourquoi les Boches, etc., etc.'

Shaking with anger, their extremely distinguished faces pinched into masks like newts, they expatiated; and my vigorous protests were simply ignored. Then, suddenly, a French doctor in uniform ran up the steps of the terrace; a devoted, charming young man who was giving up his short leave to his patients. He described the German advance:

'Three million men are advancing shoulder to shoulder with their Chicago-guns at the hip. It is indescribable.'

C

Next: 'Some parachutists are dressed from head to foot in pale blue, with transparent pale blue parachutes, and each one has a bomb in his hand, painted flesh-colour.'

The women: 'No!'

The officer: 'Yes, they look like something by Schiaparelli.'

More talk and tea. Then the officer left. He said, with a tender kind of dignity, kissing the women's hands: 'I never expect to see you again, of course.'

There was no more anger that day.

About the 17th of June rumours began that all the English had to leave France immediately. There was no reply from the Vice-Consulate at Toulon, so I telephoned the gendarmerie and the military at St. Tropez, and they said, in effect, that they'd never heard of such nonsense. Nevertheless, I went to Cannes to find out. Cannes, which I have always greatly disliked, had gone back fifty years: it seemed to have turned itself into a calm, pretty provincial town. The refugees from Menton and elsewhere had rigged their earnest-looking washing all over the faces of great, bullying hotels on the empty Croisette, and the rest of the streets had come back to life. For the English, however, it was a disquieting life. After Pétain's remark about our only having had ten divisions in France (untrue) French demeanour had cooled. On the 19th, Barclays Bank began loading itself into pantechicons. I had arrived just in time to miss the two colliers which were supposed to have evacuated Cannes, and therefore just in time to meet the first shiver of panic. The Nice consul (like the Cannes consul, and all the others) had gone, and, before leaving, had absent-mindedly burnt one or two women's passports together with the official code. This was a favourite grievance.

The British Legion and the Anglo-American Red Cross, compelled to take over the consul's duties, had their headquarters at the Carlton Hotel. There it was that I discovered, to my surprise, hundreds of distracted English. I have since seen snooty comments in the press about how they must have all been 'idle rich, and young men with wavy hair', etc., but such was not my impression. If one really examined them, they proved to be people of every kind, and the only dislikeable one I saw was an American woman who kept asseverating her absolute determination not to budge. She had a face like a weapon.



'We-ell, I've got the loveliest of all my furniture in Pa-aris, I know tha-at, but I got some *ve-ery* lovely furniture right here too, and I just won't go.' There was no reason why she should.

I had letters from my refugee women friends, in the Garage Schneider at Hyères, lying in my coat pockets like weights, but I felt sorry for these people too. Some of them were rich, it is true, but that doesn't prevent unhappiness and fear. Most of them were oldish; some were invalids; people who had settled down for good in a country they loved, with all their furniture and odds and ends that they had saved up during a life-time. They were going to lose all these things, and they knew it. That they were still there was not their fault, but that of circumstance. There had been no kind of general authoritative notice to leave. And I watched them give away their cars and houses to people they hardly knew with a certain air. Apart from this, they were not all *rentiers* by any means. There were people whose fruit farms had just begun to pay; people with little businesses; clerks, etc. Ruin, or at least the end of one life, was facing all of them; the Nazis were trundling down from Paris, and the boats had gone. I repeat, I was sorry for them.

An attempt was then made to hire the ex-Khedive of Egypt's yacht, but when, after tactful enquiries from Zürich, he discovered that the Axis had no designs on it, he refused his permission. It was things like this which made the situation exasperating, as well as alarming. The late enquirers from inland (not that everyone wasn't 'late', including those who had embarked on the colliers) could hardly believe their eyes, for example, when they realized that all that was left of H.M. Government, of King Edward VII and Lord Brougham, was the following frosty notice pinned to a locked and empty consulate:

*'Instructions to Consular Officers in the Alpes Maritimes*

British subjects enquiring about the political situation should be told that the Consulates have no more information at present than appears in the Press and Wireless. In certain eventualities the French authorities will probably evacuate the Coast from frontier to Villefranche. In this event, those British subjects compulsorily not evacuated will have to take their chance with the rest of the population. No special facilities for travelling will be given to them and the railway will

probably be congested with people wishing to get away. Consular Officers are not responsible for the evacuation of British subjects. The evacuation if decided on will be organized by the French authorities. It will of course be the duty of Consular Officers to give all assistance they can, to both the French authorities and British subjects. In the meantime, British subjects when asking about the present situation should be told that the responsibility for their plans rests on their own shoulders, and not on the shoulders of the Consular Offices in this connection. Consular Officers are warned that it is injudicious and undesirable to give their own personal views to the public as such views are invariably quoted as official, and may be in practical conflict with the views and intentions of H.M.'s Government.'

At last, on the 21st, the Mayor of Cannes announced that a special train had been chartered, for later in the day, to run from Nice to Marseille: a boat would be there. Everyone finished their packing. Twenty minutes before the train was due to leave, the Mayor arrived at the Carlton again. Softly and politely: 'You go, messieurs et mesdames, at your own risk and peril. A boat cannot be guaranteed.' This was the final shock which decided many people to risk it and stay. I myself got on the train.

*(To be continued.)*

W. R. RODGERS

## ESCAPE

The roads of Europe are running away from the war,  
Running fast over the mined bridges and past the men  
Waiting there, with watch, ready to maim and arrest them,  
And strong overhead the long snorings of the planes' tracks  
Are stretching like rafters from end to end of their power.  
Turn back, you who want to escape or want to forget  
The ruin of all your regards. You will be more free  
At the thoughtless centre of slaughter than you would be  
Standing chained to the telephone-end while the world cracks.

RUTHVEN TODD

PERSONAL HISTORY

FOR MY SON

O my heart is the unlucky heir of the ages,  
And my body is unwillingly the secret agent  
Of my ancestors; those content with their wages  
From history: the Cumberland Quaker whose gentle  
Face was framed with lank hair to hide the ears  
Cropped as a punishment for his steadfast faith,  
The Spanish lady who had seen the pitch lake's broth  
In the West Indian island and the Fife farmers  
To whom the felted barley meant a winter's want.

My face presents my history, and its sallow skin  
Is parchment for the Edinburgh lawyer's deed:  
To have and hold in trust, as feeoffee therein  
Until such date as the owner shall have need  
Thereof. My brown eyes are jewels I cannot pawn,  
And my long lip once curled beside an Irish bog,  
My son's whorled ear was once my father's, then mine;  
I am the map of a campaign, each ancestor has his flag  
Marking an advance or a retreat. I am their seed.

As I write I look at the five fingers of my hand,  
Each with its core of nacre bone, and rippled nails;  
Turn to the palm and the traced unequal lines that end  
In death—only at the tips my ancestry fails—  
The dotted swirls are original and are my own:  
Look at this fringed polyp which I daily use  
And ask its history, ask to what grave abuse  
It has been put: perhaps it curled about the stone  
Of Cain. At least it has known much of evil,

And perhaps as much of good, been tender  
When tenderness was needed, and been firm  
On occasion, and in its past been free of gender,

Been the hand of a mother holding the warm  
Impress of the child against her throbbing breast,  
Been cool to the head inflamed in fever,  
Sweet and direct in contact with a lover.  
O in its cupped and fluted shell lies all the past,  
My fingers close about the crash of history's storm.

In the tent of night I hear the voice of Calvin  
Expending his hatred of the world in icy words;  
Man less than a red ant beneath the towering mountain,  
And God a troll more fearful than the feudal lords:  
The Huguenots in me, flying St. Bartholomew's Day,  
Are in agreement with all this, and their resentful hate  
Flames brighter than the candles on an altar, the grey  
Afternoon is lit by catherine wheels of terror, the street  
Drinks blood, and pity is death before their swords.

The cantilever of my bones acknowledges the architect,  
My father, to whom always the world was a mystery  
Concealed in the humped base of a bottle, one solid fact  
To set against the curled pages and the tears of history.  
I am a Border keep, a croft and a solicitor's office,  
A country rectory, a farm and a drawing board:  
In me, as in so many, the past has stowed its miser's hoard,  
Won who knows where nor with what loaded dice.  
When my blood pulses it is their blood I feel hurry.

These forged me, the latest link in a fertile chain  
With ends that run so far that my short sight  
Cannot follow them, nor can my weak memory claim  
Acquaintance with the earliest shackle. In my height  
And breadth I hold my history, and then my son  
Holds my history in his small body and the history of another,  
Who for me has no contact but that of flesh, his mother.  
What I make now I make, indeed, from the unknown,  
A blind man spinning furiously in the web of night.

STEPHEN SPENDER

# A LOOK AT THE WORST

I

THE war is written of in the newspapers as a simple conflict between Democracy and Fascism.

Although the claims to righteousness of the democracies—in what Fascists call the Plutocracies—has been challenged by both Fascists and Communists, nevertheless, it is clear to most people that Democracy, with the vote and the traditional rights of individuals, does stand for a freedom—however incompletely achieved—which Fascism, with Dictatorship and concentration camps, would destroy. Democracy preserves within itself the possibility of change. Fascism would impose a rigid tyranny on its subjects, a tyranny which could be extended but not relaxed. There is a difference in views of life of those who are fighting to keep open the possibility of a future and those who are fighting to establish a tyranny ‘for a thousand years’, which gives this war something of the desperate character of a religious war where each side regards the other as ungodly, and is fighting for the breath of its way of life.

Thus there is justification for the straightforward official view of the war as Democracy *versus* Fascism. But, having said that, one sees just the same how compromised the phrase is. The people who most use it robbed it of all meaning before they chose to use it. To insist that nevertheless it still *has* a meaning is to defend it against the hypocritical, the complacent and the self-interested.

It is necessary to go back over old ground, to re-examine our position, in order to reassure the many disillusioned people who feel a certain undefined uneasiness about this war. I want to trace the uneasiness and see how far it was and is justified, and what remains when one has allowed for it. For there is a danger of a doubt about our rulers, our record since the last war, and the German ‘case’ against us, becoming a doubt about Democracy combined with an acceptance of Fascism as a kind of nemesis which must overtake the democracies.



In spite of the newspapers, this war does not exist simply as this war, sprung up in the middle of the night, for anyone. No one can think of it as an isolated event which began one day in late summer when the peace-loving, socially just democracies were suddenly attacked by the war-making, unjust, blood-stained Fascists. The feelings of every thinking person in the democracies resemble more what the psychologists call a 'complex' than a straightforward defensive reaction. This complex includes elements of guilt which weaken our response to the situation.

Whoever *thinks* of this war, or feels deeply about it, must think and feel about the last war, of the peace which followed it, and of the twenty years between two wars. This war grew out of the last war, just as another war may grow out of this unless (a) the victors prevent this happening, (b) there are no victors. We were victors, we made a peace whose one object was to prevent Germany from rising again. We did not succeed, indeed as soon as Germany began to get powerful we stopped trying, whereas we tried quite hard as long as she was weak and friendly to us. We failed altogether to deal with the complicated post-war situation which divided and confused and broke us into sets of mutually destructive interests. The consequences—however long we have shut our eyes to them—are exactly what we feared and anticipated when we made a crushing peace treaty: Germany is making a war in which she is seeking to correct the mistakes made by the Imperial Army in the last war; to be followed doubtless by a peace in which she will seek to correct the mistakes made by the victors then. She will see to it, if she can, that her opponents never rise again as she has done.

This sequence of events is so logical that there is a danger of fatalists being hypnotized by it. There is a risk, too, of being depressed by a past full of lost opportunities and a present full of hypocrisies into a state of mind which accepts a much worse situation imposed from the outside, in order to escape facing past, present and future all at one given moment. In Germany, just before Hitler came to power, there were many people who said: 'Things can't be worse than they are now. We might as well give Hitler a chance.' This meant that sooner than face the worst—which provides the very opportunity for making a

decisive change—they were prepared to abandon their responsibility to a set of people worse than themselves. They also then provided themselves with a basis for being sentimental about those old days of freedom which they were not prepared to defend.

It is difficult first to abandon principles and then take them up again without either giving the lie to the lofty reasons one had for abandoning them yesterday, or else making one's loyalty of to-day appear hypocritical. When one reads denunciations in the English Conservative press of Fascist aggression and crimes, it is difficult not to feel ashamed, remembering how the very people who now publish a White Paper about the Nazi barbarities in concentration camps and who most loudly condemn aggression denied or condoned these events some months ago when they were hoping that we would still be able to 'keep out of it'; remembering, too, how democracy has been betrayed in Spain, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. Our past—or is it our present?—hypocrisy makes us uneasy: it is too transparent.

Perhaps this argument ignores factors which have to be considered by people in politics. Every government has, during periods of peace, to condone the crimes of every other government. All the same, the people responsible for British propaganda should be more aware of the propaganda of the immediate past, and less self-righteous. A mere reversal of policy by the same people in power, a mere negation of everything they said before, is not sufficiently convincing.

Yet all this familiar political controversial stuff lies only on the surface of what I want to say. It is necessary to touch on it not so much to recriminate as to admit that it is there, a part of the sore situation of the past existing within the present, which cannot be ignored.

There is one great difference between the democratic and the totalitarian states which is more fundamental than the difference between forms of government, which may, indeed, become similar as the war proceeds. This is that the totalitarian states shield behind a materialistic philosophy of life in which the end of glorifying and adding power to the state justifies the use of any means, whereas the democracies, while containing within themselves the forces of a brutal and selfish materialism, still cling to certain Christian ideals, and officially approve of a

Church which has about as much relation to Christianity as the Royal Academy has to the main tradition of European art.

Nor do the democracies persecute people leading genuinely religious lives. In spite of the staleness of official religion, Christian thought, perhaps because it is passing through a period of transformation, has been a growing force in English, and especially in French life, during the past few years. When democracy claims that it is fighting for Christianity, it is certainly true that it is fighting for a society of many conflicting potentialities, one of which might be a revival of a Christian way of life.

But while in democracies people talk about, and even practise, ideals, at the same time they are at the mercy of the anarchic and ruthless and irresponsible materialism of business interests controlled by 'individualists' who respect the interests of their country and democracy no more, when commerce is threatened, than they do those of the people working for them. The War has shown how democracy, unable to choose between them, tends to be weakened by both the good and the evil within itself. Its ideals, its traditions, its Christianity, prevent it from using the barbarous methods of its opponents. Nevertheless, it has not expelled the poisons from its system. In fact, it contains great lumps of a ruthless and cynical and contemptuous materialism which form an alliance with the materialistic forces outside to overthrow the democracy. This may sound a rather abstract and fantastic picture. But it is what happened in all those democracies which had Quislings and Fifth Columnists and reactionaries in high places, ready at any moment to seize control and 'restore order' by handing their country, with 'business' intact, to the enemy.

These people do not think that the democratic ideal, the Christian tradition, culture, freedom, the interchange of creative ideas, are worth defending. More surprisingly, since reaction has long been associated with nationalism, they are not even patriots. They are as international as a Continental Railway Time Table or a Wagon-Lit. All they want is the supremacy of one international trading class over the people everywhere. They have a desperate sense of their own predicament which makes them accept the idea of an international counter-revolution to prevent an international revolution. It seems incredible that the corruption of the nineteenth century idea of the independence

of small nations should have gone so far as to extend even to France. But events have demonstrated to us with remorseless examples that nationalism has been broken down by the great International business interests, just as much as the small shop-keeper has been broken or made completely dependent on the big Chain Store or Trust.

Democracy contains within itself the potentialities of completely different forms of society, all living on more or less easy or uneasy terms with each other. We praise this, and count it part of our freedom. We also count it among our blessings that when the whole country is threatened, all the factions unite, thinking it better to preserve the form of society within which they can agree to differ than for one faction to gain supremacy at the price of selling the pass to an enemy. This is all very well so long as, firstly, the enemy does not succeed in disintegrating the democracy by turning one or more of the factions within it into a fifth column, and, secondly, a section of the ruling class in the democracy does not decide that its material interests are more likely to be helped by surrender than by resistance.

Democracy owes allegiance to several gods—freedom, self-seeking commercial individualism, and a Christian God, for example. Moreover, the worshippers at these shrines may worship at all of them, whilst, perhaps, having a preference for one over the others. The realistic, hard-headed business man also goes to Church, the Christian feels that the virtues of Charity and Poverty are out of date, freedom is also called Free Trade and Individualism, while the basis of economic equality on which it might be firmly built is dissolved in Utopianism and watery idealism. This produces in the democratic countries a strangely confused state of mind in which every action is judged or justified by various incompatible standards, in which no one knows what interests have power, in which theoretically the government can do anything, whilst in practice everyone knows it to be endlessly obstructed, and in which words like 'freedom', 'individualism', 'justice', 'peace', 'democracy' itself even, are used to explain completely opposing policies, so that it has become possible for the dictators to fling these words back in our faces and for some of us even to be impressed when they do so.

The government in a democracy is supposed to have sufficient

power even to make a social revolution, but everyone knows that its powers are limited. This is all very well when little government is required; but when drastic measures have been required, as they have been in England during the past ten years, and as they are in the United States to-day, it may be disastrous. 'Muddling through' expressed the conviction that no one need govern. In times of distress, the democracies tend to fall back on their latent religious beliefs. Days are set aside for prayer, archbishops write letters to the papers, voices give comfort over the wireless. Yet, remembering the last war, all this lacks conviction. If there is any true religious feeling, it lies not in our self-righteousness, but in our uneasy conscience. This whispers that we have done wrong and that we are paying for our mistakes; that we have stood aside when we saw others robbed and waylaid; and that now we are suffering a similar misfortune as a form of punishment.

The only purpose of dwelling so much on the mistakes of the past and the perplexities of the present is to discover something hard and solid underneath which we do, in spite of all our failings, stand for. If we get back to that which is fundamental to our beliefs, we are at least living in a tragedy where a vital force is struggling with a more powerful, but worse, principle. Or is this War one of those commercial transactions in which a new, ruthless firm, up to date in its business methods, drives an older, more picturesque, decaying firm, regarded with sentimental affection by Americans, out of the market?

The totalitarian states are countries in which every aim, every belief, every activity of mind and body, in every person, have, as far as is yet humanly possible (though the world may have still worse to show), been made subsidiary to the single aim of increasing the power of the 'leaders' at the head of the state. In Germany, world domination, by the increase of the power of the heads of the Nazi Party, becomes an end in itself. In so far as there is socialization in Germany, this is merely the breaking down of the power of the individualist conservative interests for the more centralized organization of the state. German socialism is subservient to German nationalism, and both are subservient to Hitler and the Party. In Russia things are different, in spite of some similarity in the methods used, because the aim of the dictatorship is to establish Socialism.



Doubtless, the Soviet leaders are liable to all the temptations of those who have undisputed power; nevertheless, Soviet Russia is a country where enormous social advances have been made in the interests of the whole people. Her policy is defensive and her aggressions can be reasonably explained, even if not justified, by her desire to protect herself as strongly as possible during coming years. Most observers would agree that she has good reason to fear attack, so her excuses are not specious just because they happen to resemble those given by Italy and Germany in recent years.

The dictatorships have swept aside the ideals and traditional institutions which exist in the democracies, and substituted for them a ruthless materialism—not the materialism of ‘individualists’ or ‘free traders’ divided against themselves, but a materialism subservient to, and in the interests of, the State. In Russia this materialism still has an aim, and is not exercised for its own sake and for the simple glorification of those in power. The ruthless materialism of the philosophy and method of the Communists is the centre of the struggle for the necessary power to establish a socially just system. Every violent act, every setback in its programme are justified to Communists by an appeal to their sense of the necessity of sacrificing everything else to revolutionary power. Since necessity equals truth to the Communists, and since everything they do is considered necessary, once the Party Line has been adopted it is regarded as infallible, as are also the reasons given for it. The Party may have made mistakes in the past, it may make mistakes in the future, Communists will admit, but it is inconceivable that it might be making a mistake at any given moment in the present, for the simple reason that no objective standard exists outside the Necessity which has been invoked to justify the Party Line.

In an attempt to avoid all weakness, all watering down of their socially just programme, the Communists abandon even the conception of justice itself and restate their policy simply as historic necessity. Fascism has turned the tables on the Communists by borrowing their method of unprecedented ruthlessness without being hampered by their aims and ideology. In doing this, Fascists are in a position to use Communist unscrupulousness with far greater unscrupulousness. For Fascist sympathizers are not the oppressed: they are already in positions

of power all over the world, and they have at hand the weapons to make a counter-revolution.

People who talk about historic parallels or who prove to themselves that 'human nature' makes it impossible for Fascism to triumph, should know what they are saying. Fascism admits no historic parallels in a world in which the armed man is perhaps a hundred or even a thousand times stronger than the unarmed man. Fascism does not care for human nature in a world in which all the sciences can be used to tyrannize and terrify, deceive and persuade man into obedience, and in which heroic disobedience is a secret gesture behind an impenetrable wall. In a Fascist world human nature everywhere would be the slave of mechanized weapons and mechanized systems of society. It may be, of course, that man cannot be enslaved permanently even by the machinery of the totalitarian State, because even if the majority of men are slaves, the leaders still remain human beings who may quarrel amongst themselves. This is the limited and rather hypothetical sense in which 'human nature' might still be said to count. But however one reckons with it, one has to remember that all calculations based on past history and human psychology may be wrong on account of the unprecedented conditions of a world of scientific inventions.

In both Germany and Russia there have been attacks on religion. But there is a difference in the motives of these attacks. In Russia religion was attacked firstly because it is a part of Communist dogma that religion, the 'opium of the masses' has been an ally of misery and reaction for centuries by promising the poor in heaven those treasures which have been stolen from them by their rulers on earth; secondly, because in Russia, in particular, the Church had abused its position to an extent which even non-Communists are unable to defend. Although it is a mistake to assume—as some sympathizers have been misled into doing—that Communists have charitable, humanitarian or christian motives, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the motive for their hatred of religion is at root an ethical one. In Nazi Germany, anti-religious feeling is not based on a desire to right a wrong and reverse a historically unjust process; it is based on a genuine dislike of spiritual values as such, and a desire to destroy an organization which competes with the single-minded allegiance of the individual to the State. Whereas

in Russia the materialist philosophy of the State is explicit, in Germany there have been attempts to set up a nationalist German Church and to invent mystical philosophies based on Wagnerian nationalist myths. Russia can, and will, eventually be judged by its success or failure in achieving socialism. There is no principle by which we can judge Nazi Germany, where power is an end in itself, and where culture and family life and philosophy and religion have all been made subservient to a tyranny.

The Nazis are completely modern in their technique. They have interpreted in machinery and masses of human lives Rimbaud's precept for words in poetry: 'Il faut être absolument moderne.' Compared with them, the democracies represent a confusion of impulses where the modern is choked and impeded by survivals from the past, and where the traditional has been allowed to degenerate into pastiche. Even Communism is dated in comparison by being tied down to its nineteenth-century aims.

But where do the Nazi methods come from? They come, as do the Communist methods also, from the world of big business in which one firm can be ruined and driven out of trade by the more ruthless methods of another, and in which the workers are exploited. It is an extension, on a national scale, under a system of State capitalism, of the naked and ruthless exploitation denounced in the Communist Manifesto. It is the same methods as the Communists themselves feel justified in using against the 'class enemy.'

To defeat this system, it seems that its opponents must either equal it in ruthlessness, or they must decide on the degree of freedom which is essential to maintain democracy and defend that. The most hopeless position of all is to combine the vices of an unscrupulous and destructive materialism with the weaknesses of Utopian Democracy. We must choose between cutting the cant and practising the virtues which we preach.

## II

The first section of this essay is a statement of my own position. It is necessary to say that I have such a position before discussing questions which are becoming more and more crucial for intellectuals. What right have writers and artists, who are outside

the effective machinery of politics, to make political judgments to-day? Given such opinions, what effect can they possibly have on society? What relation to his whole activity as an artist do these opinions have? Are these opinions valid at all except as habits of mind and prejudices?

Mr. F. A. Voigt—author of *Unto Cæsar*—who once singled me out for attack as an example of the intellectual dabbling in politics, deserving of punishment in a concentration camp—holds that the interference of politically ignorant intellectuals of the Left into politics has been harmful. During recent years, the Left intelligentsia has been as opinionated as it has been devoid of the information without which it is impossible to form opinions with any justice. For example, as Mr. Voigt explained to me in a recent conversation, all the opinions expressed by the *New Statesman* on the Anglo-Soviet negotiations were so much hot air to one like Mr. Voigt himself, who had seen the relevant documents. In Swift's day, Swift was intimate with members of the cabinet, so in his political writings he knew what he was talking about. To-day no one outside politics, and few people outside the government are informed.

On the other hand, Mr. Leonard Woolf, in an article recently published in the *New Statesman*, after admitting that English political parties have shown a remarkable distrust of intellectuals, nevertheless rebukes intellectuals for the kind of aloofness to politics illustrated by a quotation from a recent Comment in *Horizon*.

Both these criticisms could be—and have been—answered, but here I only quote them in order to illustrate a conflict in the intellectual's own mind. On the one hand he is 'outside' politics and therefore compelled to judge them blindly, and to act ineffectively. On the other hand, if he renounces political interests altogether and tries to discover in himself and the small circle of life immediately around him the material which he has a deep understanding of, he is blinding himself to events which stir passions everywhere to-day, and perhaps he is refusing to extend the helping hand to civilization which may, after all, be more effective than he realizes. In any case, he sets an example of indifference towards the major issues of his time.

I can illustrate this self-dissatisfaction from what I have just written in the first part of this essay. Everything I say about

Russia is largely conjecture. People whose intelligence and sincerity I trust, tell me entirely contradictory facts about Russia, which has become so much an object of propaganda and counter-propaganda that it resembles a vast modern statistical myth. 'The truth about Russia' is withheld from all but a very few, like the Holy Grail. Secondly, however strongly I feel about the necessity of a political programme which would transform the present war into an international revolution, I am not in a position to say how this might be achieved. To talk about education, propaganda, an all-democratic government, a people's army, etc., would simply be whistling to put a brave face on things.

Until the present war, it seemed to many writers that making speeches, attending conferences, sitting on committees, sending telegrams, visiting war-stricken areas, etc., might make a difference. Just one more telegram from For Intellectual Liberty, and perhaps the government would alter its foreign policy. Nothing can be clearer now than the futility of this kind of activity. This gives one an opportunity to consider again the attitude of the creative artist towards the political events of his time.

The question really is not whether the artist is entitled to have opinions, but how these opinions are going to affect his work. During the phase between Hitler's accession to power and the beginning of the present war, many writers tried to make the whole of their work reflect directly or indirectly political events, limiting their experience as far as possible to political passions. But this was (1) arbitrarily to bind the writer's imaginative life to the political programmes of his leaders. (2) To blinker his awareness to the limited view of events which political parties are bound to adopt at any moment of the history in which we are living. (3) To commit his mind to policies which might be contradicted by events, leaving in their trail the disappointed aspirations, the discarded manifestos, the tendentious books, the torn canvases, and the broken minds of the intellectuals.

I can illustrate these three points: (1) It may suit a political party at one moment to support a democratic Republic fighting for its existence against counter-revolution; or an oppressed minority like the Jews; or the idea of a great Popular Front led by liberal-minded men of goodwill, etc. Then this political line may have to be abandoned—we are told that after all the

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Republicans were Liberals (although this to an extraordinary extent was made their virtue a few months back); the grievances of the Jews are dropped; the Popular Front is abandoned, etc. But the intellectual imagination and the passionate sympathy which could produce a work of art by entering into the reality of these causes (since after all the lives of human beings are not just manœuvres and paragraphs on a party programme), cannot suddenly be put into reverse, as politicians reverse their policy by the signing of a German-Soviet Pact, or the abandonment of their policy towards Spain. (2) Even the most disinterested political causes have a more limited and biased view of the truth of a situation than is convincing in the material of art. The poems of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Browning, etc., on political causes, even at their best suffer from this limitation which strikes the reader with the sense 'There must be another side to this!' Moreover, politics have necessarily a very restricted view of life. The greatest subjects of art, such as the comparative insignificance of any human struggle compared with the length of eternity and the immensity of space, would make all politics seem like provincial struggles for booty between dusky tribes. Political causes must either rely on inferior art for their propaganda, or else be burnt up in the universal flame of great art. (3) Political causes have definite and attainable aims which are either reached or else abandoned. The artist who commits his whole imaginative life to such an end is making it subject to an external fate by which it will either be robbed of its impulse when the end is achieved, or else destroyed when it is scrapped. The refugee political writers of the German Republic are simply so much scrap, regurgitating morsels of a Germany which no longer exists and the disappearance of which removed their own motive for existence. It is hard to say this, but we must surely all see by now that the worst witnesses of what is going on in contemporary Germany are the writers expelled with the fall of the Weimar Republic, who live posthumous existences producing posthumous books which have no relation to any reality, present or past. Art which is too much committed to the passions of the present becomes tied to events which are swept into the past.

Now to go back to the first part of this essay. I see that it is an approximation, an attitude based on such evidence as I have been able to collect, but by no means a final attitude. Given the

time in which we are living, it is necessary to take one's stand on some such approximation. It may even be necessary to give one's life for it, but that does not mean that I commit, uncritically, my imaginative life as an artist to it, or that I refuse to see the working out of other and further causes outside and beyond it.

Life is short, and art is long. One may not, in a crisis of civilization, refuse a call upon one's life, any more than upon one's vote, but art nevertheless remains longer than this. The lives of artists and intellectuals may be ended by a military defeat, but the need for and the cause of art is not conquered so long as life itself goes on. The artist cannot remain aloof from the short term issues of his time, but his position is not to lose himself in them, it is to relate them to the long-term life of humanity, the whole tradition of culture in the past, present and future.

The battlefields of the politicians is the material world of people and events. He translates into terms of political action various policies which have attached to them labels such as 'peace', 'freedom', 'order', 'religion', etc. The battlefield of the writer is the whole life of the tradition of culture which is continually coming into being, expressing itself crudely and often wrongly in a symbolic language of action and achievement within the world. The weapons the writer uses are words. He tries to translate the crude and often unrelated and seemingly meaningless language of events back into terms of the understanding of the human mind, so that the present may be related to the past, the tradition of the past not lost in a chaos of material accidents, and a future be left open in which human life has some significance in relation to the knowledge of the past. He is not imposing a pattern on the world, he is discovering and insisting on a connection which is always there so long as it is not allowed to become lost; a connection which the men of action are usually occupied in trying to destroy. One of the most obvious follies of the men of action is their violent misuse of words, in order to put their policies in the best light, and to claim a spurious connection with the tradition which is not really there. Even the upholders of the best causes are constantly misusing words. The task of the writer is not—like the political propagandist—to join in the general conspiracy to apply the wrong words to political actions, it is to restore to words their

true meaning, and thus to keep alive the values which the words represent. This insistence on life and the values of life might indeed to-day be the most revolutionary of all tasks.

If, with this in mind, one looks at the situation in which we find ourselves to-day, one arrives at a twofold conclusion. Firstly, the writer is an ordinary citizen, not above or apart from other men, with the same decisions to make as they have. He has to take up an attitude which involves deciding for or against the present war. I have given my own reasons for supporting it. But, secondly, he submits this attitude to the test of a further attitude of which he is only the interpreter. This is the attitude of the whole tradition within which we live. Against the sense of what words have meant before, he tests the words that the politicians use when they say that they are fighting for freedom, and the priests when they say that they are fighting for Christianity. If there were a real coincidence between the words that the politicians use and the reality of the whole tradition, there would probably be an art of living ideas produced by this war. As things are, there are good reasons for supporting the war, and we must wait for the emergence of a deeper life under the defences which are being put up to stabilize a system of compromises against a reaction to something worse than we have yet known.

It follows that what the creative writer is living for would not necessarily be finally provided by a military victory, nor destroyed by a military defeat. A military victory would only be a beginning, and might even be a dangerous one if it at all resembled the circumstances in which the last war ended. For what is required is a situation in which the living needs of society are not made subservient to the material needs of interests, and in which human values are not debased before standards of wealth and power and machinery. It is difficult to believe that this situation can arise without a collapse of the ruling and possessing castes on both sides. We are driven to look forward, as Rilke in the last war expressed it, to 'the moment when the exhausted war collapses into itself, leaving the immense spaces it takes up to emptiness, stillness, a future that is to begin anew . . . When?' That this feeling is remarkably widespread is demonstrated by the sensations almost of relief with which the English received news of the collapse of the clique which has governed

France during the past ten years, and which is more responsible than any other group for the frustration and impotence of the post-war epoch. For that which is left—the Pétain Government—is a puppet parade for everyone to see in its true colours; it is not the miserable pretence to which we feel obliged to tie our hopes for a better future. The end of that phase in French history has supplied us, in spite of ourselves, with a War Aim, for when we win we cannot, at all events, keep that gang in power.

Fascism is not just an immensely dynamic force which is sweeping us all down into the blackness of its psycho-pathic motives. It is also a reaction from a dynamism of our own. In the democracies there are and have been forces of immense potential power in science, literature and art. But one has only to recall the names of the leaders of the modern movement to detect our great weakness—that Einstein and Freud, Picasso and Gide and Joyce were all isolated figures. A seemingly unbridgeable gulf divides their work from the audiences which might have given them a forcefulness as impressive as flame-throwing tanks and dive-bombers. A few of these notable men, such as Wells and Thomas Mann, do make gestures across the gulf—and what do they see on the other side? They see the masses of people who, however deep their ignorance and divided their loyalties, are at least aware of a few things: that war to-day is completely unnecessary as a means of solving our difficulties, that the potentiality of the world to provide happiness and health and comfort to its whole population is greater than men ever dreamed of in the past. Yet because these individuals are shut off by those comparatively few interests, constructive minds are isolated or they themselves are forced in despair to adopt violent political methods. But the collapse of the wealthy and the powerful on all sides might mean that what is necessary would be the sensible use of our civilized tradition and resources of mind as well as of wealth, which would be beneficent to all.

ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL

## THE CAP AND THE BANTAM

No one could see, not you nor even Carl at the pinnacle wheel, who knew Ben's moods like the lines of his own palm, knew his wife, the thin woman in New Orleans sinewed with vain anxieties, and the adroit technician, Franklin, his only son: no one could see in Ben, the grizzled captain, now standing with eyes set on the nearing jetty, the audacious youth of thirty years earlier, cap acock and heart unlaced for adventure.

Carl for that matter never tried to follow the red worm of thought down the alleys of the ill-planned brain. From the sight of the well-known back, braced solid as a sea-chest, he pictured no more the blue eyes looking inwards, as if the past and mysterious universe of dream revolved within their pupils.

Ben Lavasser wiped the sweat from his face and turned. 'Thirty-four year,' he said, 'the first port we made my first voyage out. Never been back since.'

Carl, uneasy with past and future, grinned and spat. 'You been lucky, cap.' His gob curled through the heavy air in a half-bow, raced back as it struck the wash.

'May be,' Ben answered, returning his eyes to the squat white town and thoughts to the past. That first voyage was the climax of young ambition, to exchange the solid misery of land for the running sea, abandon the familiar bickering of parents on the stoop for new ports and the flowers of stranger climates.

Bodu, his first landfall, was charged with powerful memories. All was new under the hazy sun; giant trees bearded with moss, branches draped with vines and cactus in the nook of their armpits, the slim Indian girls, dance-halls, rum in a courtyard and the young limey.

'There was a young limey,' he said, half to himself, half to Carl. 'Jumped ship here that trip. We were buddies. Alf his name was, Alf . . . Cockshaw or something . . . I can't remember.'

'U-huh!' Carl swung the wheel a point to port. A tender,



tugging barges, was making for the Frenchman, just dropped anchor in the roadstead.

'Forget his name,' said Ben, 'but his face is clear as I see it now. The girls were crazy about him.' He came upon the fine, clean-cut face like an unused gift packed in an old chest and forgotten, fresh as new among the bundled letters of dead lovers. 'I wonder how he made out.'

He and Alf were less than a fortnight in the same ship, a minute in the day of man's life. Yet even now after years, the memory lay shining under his hand like a tool mislaid for a moment.

Carl brought the pinnacle alongside the steps and Lavasser picked up his grip. 'Eight in the morning, Carl,' he said. 'I'm stopping the night over some place.'

'Okay, cap,' Carl said, grinning not at what Ben might do but thought of the black girls, who, careless of shark and barracuda, swim naked to ships in the roadstead to sell sailors heaven for a dollar.

Soon as Ben came up the steps, three niggers ran from a sweet drink stall, calling, 'Carry you bag, mistah. Cheap hotel. You like nice girl, dam cheap, dam clean.'

Lavasser raised his fist. 'Get the hell out,' he said. A Southerner, he hated their colour, stench of their acrid sweat, their familiarity.

They backed off, like buzzards scared but still ravening. As he walked on, he heard one say, 'God dam de bloody white shot.' But he did not turn. The flag over the customs house was Union Jack, not Stars and Stripes.

He knew harbour-raff, the pimps and porters of Aden, Shanghai, Said and Singapore. Yet these niggers enraged him. Time, the cheat, had forged a false memory. Standing among the tethered goats on the cropped grass, he saw nothing he remembered. The white buildings skirting the quay and the pompous edifice opposing them across the square were new since his time.

Yet when he searched his mind for what distinguished Bodu from other ports since visited, there was nothing visual. Bodu was merged in the composite of tropical harbours, Dakar, Papeete, Puerto Limón. All that set Bodu apart was the limey, Alf the bantam, trim, unruffled; Alf and himself eighteen with course set for world conquest.

For a moment, only fear of ridicule and imagination of Carl's grin kept him from returning to the ship. But like many, he held normality must deny the laws of instinct and he went on into town.

Away from the quay, Bodu was unchanged. Charlotte Square, that dusty oblong, was just the same. Different negroes lay on the scant grass beneath the eucalyptus trees, but in the same postures of exhaustion.

Yet there was one change. It was the remembered place, but without magic, like a valley, first discovered in sunshine with a lover, revisited alone under clouds.

He caught his image in a mirror, framed among 'seconds' in a draper's window. His ageing face was scribbled with the agenda of a hard life, notes around his eyes and resolutions across the forehead. But he thought, with sudden joy, I have a son. The rise of the brilliant Franklin complemented his decline.

A girl came and looked in the mirror next his image. She was a Chinky, formed like a schoolgirl, straight and undeveloped. 'What you doin', darlin'?' she whispered.

Taking her in the mirror, he pondered recapturing his youth in her body. Then he turned without answering and left her.

At the corner of the block, he halted outside a hotel. It was the Bristol, the place where he and Alf got oiled and Alf vowed to stay when he jumped ship. It had not gone down or up in the world. The paint was still flaking from the woodwork and it was just as dirty, but no more dirty than it had been thirty years before.

He smiled as he climbed the stairs, avoiding the little heap of dog's dung in the centre of the coconut matting. He would take a room there for the night.

There was no one at the reception desk; but a notice beneath a bell-push read, 'Please push.' He pushed.

But no bell rang. No one came to attend to him. Could Alf have stuck this one-horse town?

On the right was a vast dining-room, laid with the crumbs of earlier eaters; on the left, a bleak dance floor, unpolished and undanced. And Alf tried to persuade him to jump ship, too, try his luck. He beat the desk with his fist.

From somewhere drifted a murmur of voices. But no one answered his thumping. A nigger waiter in white appeared at

the far end of the dining-room, but when he saw the Captain, he went away quickly.

Lavasser swore and thumped the desk again. Looking up, his eye caught a notice hung large on the wall. 'This hotel is the property of Alfred Bagshawe and Company Limited.' The name fell like cogs into gear. Alf was not Cock but Bagshawe; was still here, made good, owned a hotel.

The voices continued, like the prompter's whisper at amateur theatricals, and Ben, excited with his discovery, picked up his grip and went in search.

The owners of the voices were in the bar, three coons at a table beside a pyramid of buckled Pabst beercans on the verandah. 'De white man take de riches from dis isle and what he leave de starvin' masses, man?' asked one. 'Pox and de clap,' another answered. The nigger barboy stood at the far end of the bar, watching two darkie waiters play snooker.

Lavasser rapped on the bar. 'Hey, Sambo. Rum punch.'

The barboy turned slowmotion, slowmotion made the punch and passed it slowmotion across, one eye still on snooker. 'Eighteen cent,' he said yawning. The coons were silent, watching the newcomer, buckra, potential spy.

Lavasser flicked across a shilling. 'Where's Mr. Bagshawe?'

The negro watched him, unblinking. 'Dey no Mistah Bagshawe.' He picked up a glass and polished it slowly with a filthy cloth. 'Dere's de whole trouble in de nutshell.' The coons laughed.

One of them came over to the bar. 'Nip o' rum, George,' he said, 'an' two bottle sodah.'

'If there ain't no Mr. Bagshawe, why they say this dump belongs to Alfred Bagshawe?' Ben asked.

'The proprietor of this palatial hostel is *Sir* Alfred Bagshawe,' said the coon, 'an esteemed citizen of Bodu, who would not deign to inhabitate these premises, since he is the proud possessor of an opulent mansion in our thriving suburb of Miramar.' He took the quarter bottle of rum in one hand, the soda water in the other, bowed to Ben, then to the barboy and returned to his table.

Ben ordered another punch. 'Was he always *Sir* Bagshawe,' he asked, 'or did they make him that because of something he did?'

He addressed his question to the barman, but the same verbose coon answered. 'Not somethin', but somebody he did,' he said. 'One might say because of *everybody* he did, because there isn't anybody he hasn't done.' He winked at the others and they all laughed.

'Be careful what you say about Alf Bagshawe,' Ben said, walking over to the table. 'Alf's the best man I ever met, so mind your step, Nigger.'

The three men sat, clutching their glasses.

'I don't like your tone,' Ben said. 'Where I come from, they know how to treat your kind. Yessir, the Klan knows what's good for you.'

Then he turned to the barboy. 'Where's the telephone, Sambo?'

Driving to Miramar, Ben thought of the telephone conversation. He was not quick to catch the tones of meaning: in his job it was not necessary. The owners gave orders and he obeyed; he gave orders and others obeyed.

While he waited for Bagshawe to come to the 'phone, he heard the music of a party. Then Alf picked up the receiver and it was 'This is Sir Alfred speaking,' in high limey. But when Ben said, 'D'you remember the Robert E. Lee, Alf, you remember Ben Lavasser thirty-four year ago?' he quit Sir Alfred and burst out laughing. 'God durn my eyes, it's you at last, Ben,' he said. 'By God, it's good to hear that voice again, Ben. When can I see you?'

'There's only to-night,' he answered. 'But it sounds like you've got a heap of folks and I wouldn't want to break in on you all.'

Alf's answer was high limey, like Sir Bagshawe again. 'That's all right, ole man, the more the merrier,' he said. 'You must come.'

It's hard for old friends to meet among new. But there was no alternative; it was then or never.

The car swung from the dusk of the high road through gates into the night of a wooded drive. Then, 'Here he live,' the driver stopped outside a fretwork palace; not solid like the wooden colonial buildings of New Orleans, but cheap, fussy and pretentious like a building at an exhibition.

Music and a cataract of voices poured through the open

windows. It had that quality of abstract gaiety films about ballrooms in Vienna sometimes capture.

He climbed the stoop, and when no one answered his knocking, he turned the handle and walked in. The hall was empty and he put his hat among others on a bench, looked in a mirror and mopped the sweat from his face. A stranger, he feared to break the close-spun intimacy of the ballroom, was a plain sailor who preferred plain sailing.

Then the door of the ballroom opened and a girl ran out towards the stairs. Seeing the captain, she stopped. 'Oh!' she said. 'Are you Ben Lavasser?'

His heart keeled over. She was small, like Alf, and even more finely made; had his air of not needing the world round, almost as if supposing the solid earth melted, she would not sink. 'You're Alf's girl,' he said and took her hand with such heartiness she winced.

'Dad's talked about you so often,' she said, laughing softly, 'I can scarcely believe you exist; like Santa Claus.'

'I could have told' (to be Franklin's age now!) 'I could have told anywhere you were his daughter.' He stared at her with such open longing and delight that she turned away embarrassed. 'I'll take you to Daddy,' she said, 'He's dying to see you.' She had the same slight gesture of her head that he had forgotten in her father, tossing away a subject when it became too heavy.

A white-haired woman was standing near the door of the ballroom. Her face was like a worn glove and her tired automatic smile, when the girl introduced her as mother, recalled his own wife, jerked by the strings of nervous convention. 'She doesn't matter,' he thought, as he shook her hand. 'In this family, it's Alf and the girl, like Franklin and me.'

The girl put her arm through his. 'Dad'll be at the bar,' she said. 'I expect you're thirsty, too.'

The band struck up, and, suddenly reluctant to be parted from her as though it was she and not Alf he had come to see, he said, 'Let's dance first' and, taking her in his arms, swung her out on to the floor among the gathering couples.

But immediately he had done it, he realized the mistake. His dancing, approved in cabarets and brothels, was too coarse, direct, crude. And resenting his action, she would not follow

him, opposed her smallness and fragility to his massive strength. 'What's your name?' he asked.

She answered 'Ann,' but looking to one side at a friend, smiling off her complicity. So despite her lightness, he felt as if he were carrying her. 'Let's go find your dad,' he said.

He followed her, as she nodded, touched arms, 'See you in just one minute, darling,' weaving her intricate way to the bar. Then she paused and smiling said, 'You said you could recognise me from Dad, Mr. Lavasser. Can you recognise Dad from me now?' She was turned towards three men standing at the bar. One was tall, a white nigger, with black curly hair and the veined mulberry complexion that comes from drinking too much rum; the second, the same height, was young, wore horn-rimmed spectacles. The third, red, bull-necked, sweating, was also a stranger, till, putting down his glass, he raised his arms and shouted, 'Jesus God man, Ben Lavasser! Where've you been all this time, you old bastard, you.'

Ben turned back to the girl, who smiled and nodded. 'This,' she said, introducing the white nigger, 'is Sir Butler O'Rory. And this,' the horn-rimmed youth bowed, 'is Mr. Dysart. We're going to be married, you know.'

'Well, you old so and so,' said Bagshawe, driving his fist into Ben's ribs, 'how's the world been using you, eh? Have a drink, eh? By God, you're a sight for sore eyes, Ben. Same old Ben. Haven't changed a bit.' He spoke with a booming joviality that was rather infectious.

'You haven't changed either, Alf,' Ben said, looking into his eyes, which he saw for the first time were not one colour but changing green and grey with yellow flecks. 'Put on a bit of weight, maybe.'

Sir Bagshawe laughed. 'Can't have too much of a good thing, eh?' He looked round for others to enjoy his joke. But Ann and her young man were dancing and Sir Butler was sidling away. 'O'Rory,' he called. 'This is Ben, the old shipmate I told you about, the fellow who wouldn't settle down with me. Thought his fortune lay just behind the skyline. Did you find it, Ben, the crock o' gold, layin' at the bottom of the rainbow.'

The white nigger smiled. 'O'Rory's our cock K.C. here. But I remember the time when he was a little struggling barrister with chambers off Charlotte Square next door a ship's chandler's.'



They were standing at the end of the long room. The band was playing a quickstep and the dancers turning, swung couple by circling couple into focus and away, laughing or sentimental, formal or intent, a procession of possible lives, conditional futures and pasts unfulfilled, a pack suited with could, might, want to and maybe. 'The Bristol last time . . . and now this . . . Ben, the only chap in Bodu who can really appreciate . . .' Bagshawe's voice had the resonance of words spoken in a tunnel. And the young Ann with her boy friend throwing smiles like largesse, whirled past, absorbed in each other and deaf to the tick of time.

'Come into the lib'y, ole boy,' said Sir Bagshawe. 'Leave the rabble to enjoy themselves.'

'I can't say how good it is to see you, ole boy,' Alf said, fetching a bottle of whiskey and a syphon from a locker. 'It really is.' He looked up with his eyes flickering green and yellow and slatey grey. 'I've often dreamed of this.' He couldn't leave the subject, like a whippet which has caught the electric hare and found it false. 'A scotch? A highball? I can talk American, see?' He poured two whiskeys and soda. 'Well, how's things? How's the world treated you?'

Lavasser lifted his glass, let the spirit roll tingling across his tongue. 'I looks towards you,' he said.

'Ha!' bellowed Bagshawe, 'Ha! You remember the old toast. And I likewise bows. Fancy you remembering that.'

'I remember more than that,' Ben said. 'I remember what we talked about, things we wanted to do and a book you lent me, *Tom Cringle's Log*. I've still got it, at home.' He looked round the booklined walls. 'You've got all the books you want now, Alf.'

Sir Bagshawe laughed. 'But no time to read 'em. That's life all over. But I don't regret it. What I have got,' with a scoop of his hand he included the heavy mahogany desk, the old pictures, the ballroom with couples dancing to his band, drinking his cocktails, taking his commands, 'what I've got is worth all *Tom Cringle's Log* and the rest.'

Alf's eyes puzzled and fascinated Ben. It wasn't their shifting colour, but their brilliance and precision. They only looked outwards and had no depth. There seemed to be nothing in the back of them. 'You've done pretty well for yourself,' Ben said.

Alf laughed. It was a pleasant, musical laugh, like Ann's. But there was no amusement in it; it was more like a note on a horn, a chord on a piano. 'The fruit was ready for the picking, man,' he said. 'Just one dam thing after another. The grocery stores; then the rum business; then the hotels, the country club, the Miramar estate. You know I own every hotel on this blessed island. But if it hadn't been me, it would have been the next man.'

The captain couldn't answer. He didn't disapprove; success was his philosophy. But a censor forbade him to say a word of encouragement. He helped himself to another whiskey.

'Help yourself,' Alf said and walked over, glancing at the books he had no time to read. 'The blessing of this place is you can do anything. The Government will back you up. If you've got the little crisps that talk, I mean.'

'The what?'

Bagshawe rubbed finger and thumb. 'The oodle, man. Mazuma. Dinero.'

'I like your girl, Alf,' Ben said. 'She's like you were, like I remember you.'

The fat man picked up a cigar and bit the end off. 'Fine lass!' He spat the tag on the floor. 'Real fine lassie, Ann is.'

'I've got a boy,' Ben said, pulling out his wallet. 'I've got his photograph.' He drew out the snapshot he always carried.

'I wanted to have a boy,' said Alf, lighting the cigar. 'I mean, what's the point of all this, if there isn't a lad to carry the Bagshawe on?' He shook his head. 'Nobody can say I didn't try, Ben, and not just at one shop, either. But it was a girl, like a curse, every bloody time.'

'My boy's name's Franklin,' Ben said, holding out the snapshot. 'He's a genius at aeroplane-design. Fokker. Sopwith. It'll be Lavasser soon.'

Alf took the photograph and said, 'You wouldn't think that girl Ann had got a man's brain for business, to look at her. But she's sharp as a razor, Ben.' He came close and beat his words home with the snapshot. 'I've taken that girl into partnership and by God, man, she's thought of ways I never would've dared, and got away with it.'

'Pardon,' Ben said, taking the photograph before it was ruined.

'That Dysart boy she's marrying's got oceans of the ready, but the girl retains sole ownership when I die. If she was only a man . . .'

Ben put the snapshot back into his wallet, and Alf suddenly noticed it. 'I say,' he said, 'weren't you going to show me something?'

Ben shook his head. 'Your mistake,' he said. He finished off his drink. 'I reckon I must be going now,' he said.

'But you can't go,' Sir Bagshawe said. His protective joviality was pierced at last. Even he could sense Ben's frigidness. 'You aren't offended about anything, Ben?'

'No,' Lavasser held out his hand.

Bagshawe took it. 'Any time you're this way, Ben, give me a call,' he said. 'I'm just the same old Alf at heart, you know. I don't want you to think because I've got on, I don't want to see old pals again.' He did not let go of Ben's hand. 'And I have got on, you know. Admit, you never expected when I jumped ship that day I'd come to this, did you, ole man?'

Ben couldn't answer; it was like when he had to tell an injured stoker he was blind. Yet in every second of silence, the complacency fled further and fear advanced. 'Tell me,' Bagshawe repeated, his voice quivering, 'you never expected all this, did you, you old so and so?'

'No,' Ben said at last. 'I certainly did not.'

Alf's face broke into smiles, like a wilting flower refreshed by rain. His buoyancy returned, his voice resounded. 'I knew you wouldn't, ole man,' he said laughing. 'But it wasn't me. The harvest was ready for the reaping. Anybody could have done it. Why, I believe you'd have done every bit as well as I have, if you'd stayed.'

HUGH KINGSMILL

## RUDYARD KIPLING

MR. SHANKS seems to have written this book (*Rudyard Kipling. A Study in Literature and Political Ideas.* By Edward Shanks. Macmillan. 7/6) in the heart-sinking mood of a man trying to persuade himself that an old enthusiasm is still as strong as ever. His predicament is especially unenviable when he tries to discriminate between what he calls Kipling's 'authoritarianism' and 'the totalitarian state as we now see it on the Continent'. In his youth Kipling wrote:

An' if you treat a nigger to a dose of cleanin'-rod  
'E's like to show you everything he owns.

In his later years, as Mr. Shanks points out, he expressed the strongest disapproval of German violence and aggression, but a change of situation is not a change of heart. No doubt the nigger expressed the strongest disapproval of the cleaning-rod. The best that Mr. Shanks can do for Kipling as a political thinker is to claim that he influenced the political thought of H. G. Wells. In a story called *With the Night Mail* Kipling pictured a world run by an Aerial Board, who control all the traffic of the planet. Their motto is 'Transport is Civilization', and it cannot be denied that Mr. Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come* is inspired by the same faith.

Mr. Shanks has, however, given a clear account of Kipling's work, with illustrative quotations, so many and so well chosen that a reader unacquainted with Kipling could form a fairly complete idea of him from this book alone, however widely this idea might differ from the one urged by Mr. Shanks.

Round about 1890 England had become sick of peace, retrenchment and reform, the craving for violence which recurs after every long period of peace was beginning to be felt, and a number of writers, Conan Doyle, Rider Haggard, Stanley Weyman and Seton Merriman, were already strenuously catering for the mood expressed in Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Shall we never shed blood?' In addition to the men of talent who serve as

mediums for their generation, there is usually a man of genius who is entangled in the predominant desires of his time by some weakness or division in his nature. Byron, driven by his vanity to compete for universal attention with Napoleon, sacrificed his gifts to the current taste for blighted Titans; Dickens, who was extremely ill-adapted to marriage, became the laureate of the Victorian hearth; and Kipling, a nervous misanthropic artist, preached action and service, and figured in the minds of the late Victorian public as a man who was never happy except at some danger point on the outskirts of the Empire.

Kipling, who anticipated Hitler in the use of the swastika as an emblem for his work, had the same nostalgic admiration for the ruling caste of his country. In *Stalky and Co.* he pictured his old school as run on public school lines, with fags and the rest of the gear, and as suffused, under a right feeling headmaster, with imperialistic sentiment. But from a recent book by G. C. Beresford, who was a close friend of Kipling at school, it appears that there were no fags, that the boys were not interested in the Empire, and that the headmaster, an amiable man with æsthetic and socialistic leanings, was a friend of Burne-Jones, whom he once helped to organize a Workmen's Neutrality Demonstration against the imperialistic Beaconsfield. Kipling, according to Beresford, was a podgy boy with spectacles, who hated games, as is plain in *Stalky and Co.*, but was not, as in that book, a resourceful rebel against the masters and the athletes. Almost as dark as a native of India, where he was born, Kipling was chiefly remarkable for his precocious knowledge of books and art. There was a tough set in the college, but Kipling avoided it, favoured by the unsystematized tone of the place. Yet even in an ordinary public school he would probably have got off lightly, for, as his cordial relations with the headmaster show, he soon developed that knack of being in with authority which was later to make him the spokesman of everything least congenial to his poetic side.

Convincing though Beresford is on the whole, his anxiety to picture the youthful Kipling as utterly indifferent to the enthusiasms of his maturity sometimes carries him too far. Shortly before Kipling left school, a lunatic tried to assassinate Queen Victoria, and Kipling wrote a poem which Beresford suggests was not quite serious. It is supposed to be a message of loyalty from

the college, and appears to be quite as serious as any of his subsequent performances in the same style:

. . . And some of us have fought for You  
Already in the Afghan pass—  
Or where the scarce-seen smoke-puffs flew  
From Boer marksmen in the grass.

Once more we greet You, though unseen  
Our greeting be, and coming slow,  
Trust us if need arise, O Queen,  
We shall not tarry with the blow.

On leaving school Kipling returned to India, where his father was curator of the museum at Lahore. Both his parents were devoted to Rudyard, advising and directing him until his early marriage provided him with another guardian.

As a journalist in India, Kipling suffered a good deal of mortification. Un-English to look at, and with parents who did not belong to the ruling Anglo-Indian caste, he passed through an anti-social phase, in which he preferred the company of soldiers and natives to that of sahibs. But 'the bitter paths wherein I stray' led quickly into the highway of fame and wealth, and in his early twenties he was back in England, where he found the public disposed to welcome any writing which was not about themselves. Half a century of money-making had disgusted the nation with that scrambling of pigs round a trough which the Victorians called individualism, and everyone was ready to be regimented into a nobler form of existence. There were socialists who dreamed of a perfect world, and imperialists who dreamed of a still larger Empire, but at bottom every one had the same desire, to take refuge from himself in collective action.

Kipling, having escaped from Kipling, expressed his new-found philosophy through Dick Heldar, the hero of a novel appropriately called *The Light that Failed*. Men, says Dick Heldar, must live under orders, and never think for themselves or have real satisfaction in their work. Human beings were only material to work with, and what they said or did was of no consequence. Who issues the orders under which men must live, Heldar does not say, nor did Kipling ever ask. In all his work he accepted the



collective instinct of the herd—‘The law of the pack’—as infallible, and envied animals for obeying this law unquestioningly. ‘The poor brute man,’ he writes, ‘an imperfectly denatured animal intermittently subject to the unpredictable reactions of an unlocated spiritual area’—a sentence which reveals an attitude to religion similar to A. E. Housman’s, another unharmonized poet who kindled more easily to Queen Victoria than to God.

With machines, as even more predictable than animals, Kipling always felt at ease, after he had invested them with enough personality to make them companionable, and not enough to make them capricious. Judging from one of his silliest and most famous poems, he would have enjoyed *Romeo and Juliet* more if Romeo had been a stoker and Juliet a turbine:

Why don’t poets tell:

I’m sick of all their quirks and turns—the loves and doves they dream—

Lord, send a man like Robbie Burns to sing the song o’ Steam . . .

Interdependence absolute, foreseen, ordained, decreed,

To work, ye’ll note, at any tilt an’ every rate o’ speed.

An’ singin’ like the Mornin’ Stars for joy that they are made;

While, out o’ touch o’ vanity, the sweatin’ thrust-block says:

‘Not unto us the praise, or man—not unto us the praise!’

The cruelty in Kipling sprang from the envy of happier natures in which his deification of the machine, literal or metaphorical, was rooted. When Dick Heldar loses his eyesight, he cannot face life, which had only been bearable to him for the sights which distracted him from himself. He goes to the Soudan, and is killed by a stray bullet while listening to the slaughter of some natives who had imprudently attacked an armoured train. Wild with delight at the sounds and smells, he stretches himself on the floor of the train, crying: ‘God is very good—I never thought I’d hear this again. Give ’em hell, men! Oh, give ’em hell!’

This is not the brutality of a crude and vigorous man. Kipling is always the observer, never the actor, in his imagined scenes of violence, finding a balm for his own self-contempt in picturing the humiliation and suffering of others. In one of his stories, *My Sunday at Home*, he narrates how a navvy thrashes a doctor who, mistakenly believing he has swallowed poison, gives him an

emetic. The person who tells the story is careful not to interfere. 'I withdrew to a strategic distance on the overhead bridge, and, abiding in the exact centre, looked on afar.'

*The Mutiny of the Mavericks* brings out still more clearly how much of the bully's jackal there was in Kipling, whose enthusiasm for the British Empire was always most feverish when there was trouble with some small nation. In this story an agitator joins an Irish regiment, to promote sedition, and is taken into action by two tommies who have guessed his mission. He tries to escape, but is heaved and kicked back, and at last, mad with fear and frothing at the mouth, rushes forward and is killed. The story ends with one of the tommies being asked by the other if he would have shot the man, had he come back alive, and replying, 'I doubt I wud bekase of the fun he gave us'—a fitting remark to round off an incident as incredible as it is disgusting, men engaged in an action having neither the time nor the mood for stage-managing comic effects.

The vein of cruelty in Kipling was not accepted as a virile protest against over-civilized effeminacy without some preliminary squirming. Sir Ian Hamilton, who met Kipling when he was becoming known in India for his *Departmental Ditties*, offered to take some of his work back to England, and submit it to two authors of his acquaintance, Andrew Lang and William Sharp. The result was told by Sir Ian in *The Daily Sketch* at the time of Kipling's death. The story Kipling entrusted to Ian Hamilton was *The Mark of the Beast*, in which two Anglo-Indians torture a native leper. Andrew Lang, after reading it, said that he would gladly give a fiver not to have read 'this poisonous stuff'. William Sharp advised the instant burning of 'this detestable piece of work', and predicted that the author would die mad before the age of thirty. Within a year everyone was talking about Kipling, and Andrew Lang, Sir Ian says, had become one of his warmest admirers. Charity may cover a multitude of sins, but success transmutes them into virtues.

Having become a member of the ruling caste, Kipling raised as many barriers as possible between himself and the rest of mankind. The author of

It is enough that through Thy grace  
I saw naught common on Thy earth

spent much of his time discriminating between himself and the 'lesser breeds without the Law', among whom at one time or another he included Russians, Americans, and Germans, to say nothing of such lesser subdivisions of humanity as M.P.'s travelling in India, Fenians, pacifists and 'the suburban Toilet-Club favoured by the late Mr. Oscar Wilde'. Though he valued knowledge in general, he preferred inside knowledge, which he communicated in what might be called an inside style, the tone of a man talking allusively with two or three friends as experienced as himself. A genteel public for whom the old English novelists were too coarse felt flattered at being allowed to overhear what Kipling was saying. In Fielding people thrashed each other with cudgels, in a vulgar unfinished way, careless what members of the public might hurry to the scene. In Kipling—'Biel came out of the Court, and Strickland dropped a gut trainer's whip in the verandah. Ten minutes later Biel was cutting Bronckhorst into ribbons behind the old Court cells, quietly and without scandal. What was left of Bronckhorst was sent home in a carriage; and his wife wept over it and nursed it into a man again.'

This raffish sham-masculine style intimidated the overfed eighteen-nineties, and when Kipling asked 'What do they know of England, who only England know?' the public hung their heads, instead of replying that they knew a good deal more than could be known to any one rich and famous at twenty-five. But there is no reason to suppose that Kipling did not share the illusions of his public. He had travelled widely, and amassed a lot of facts. It was the age of science, information was more valued than insight, quantity than quality, and Kipling, like his French equivalent Zola, pursued life with a note-book in his hand.

Underneath his confused philosophy there was a love for the English countryside which went deep into his nature, touching what was least damaged in him:

Take of English earth as much  
As either hand may rightly clutch.  
In the taking of it breathe  
Prayer for all who lie beneath . . .  
Lay that earth upon your heart  
And your sickness shall depart.

In *My Sunday at Home*, between the convulsions of the navy and the groans of the pommelled doctor, the narrator looks out over the countryside—‘What a Garden of Eden it was, this fatted, clipped and washen land! . . . A light puff of wind—it scattered flakes of may over the gleaming rails—gave me a faint whiff as it might have been of fresh coconut, and I knew that the golden gorse was in bloom somewhere out of sight.’ Kipling’s poetic feeling for England comes out here, though it is flawed by the implied reference to the anything but fatted, clipped and washen lands from which the narrator is enjoying a temporary surcease. As is usual with those who decry the individual, Kipling could never rise above himself, and it would be difficult to find fifty consecutive words in any of his landscapes free from some trace of his wary, hard-bitten informed pose. His descriptions suffer also from an excess of detail. It is not the business of a poet, Wordsworth said, to take an inventory of nature. The brilliant vivid touches in Kipling too often lose themselves in a mass of impressions which seem to have been memorized on the spot, and when these have been exhausted bravado or rhetoric takes their place, as in this conclusion of a long passage, the essence of which could have been put into ten lines—‘In a deep dene behind me an eddy of sudden wind drummed through sheltered oaks, and spun aloft the first dry sample of autumn leaves. When I reached the beach the sea-fog fumed over the brickfields, and the tide was telling all the grasses of the gale beyond Ushant. In less than an hour summer England vanished in chill grey. We were again the shut island of the North, all the ships of the world bellowing at our perilous gates; and between their outcries ran the piping of bewildered gulls.’

When the Great War broke out, Kipling wrote a poem telling what England had to defend—

Comfort, content, delight,  
The ages’ slow-bought gain.

Kipling’s England was the England of the Athenæum, Carlton and Beefsteak Clubs, of the country-house and the working population as it shows itself to the well-to-do; and in the landscape of this England, as its best ornament, he placed Georgie, the Brushwood Boy, a strange bloom of that sentimentalization of the upper classes which was one of the unexpected products of a

democratic century. Georgie belongs to a county family, drops his g's, is a first-rate regimental officer, is unaware of the adoration women feel for him, and when he comes home on leave reduces the housekeeper to tears of pious gratitude and causes profound emotion among the men staff from the butler down to the under-keeper. To this projection of his ideal man Kipling gives the dreams in which he himself escaped from the herd, from the tumult about nothing and the shouting about everything—

Over the edge of the purple down,  
Where the single lamplight gleams,  
Know ye the road to Merciful Town  
That is hard by the Sea of Dreams—  
Where the poor may lay their wrongs away,  
And the sick may forget to weep?  
But we—pity us! Oh, pity us!—  
We wakeful; ah, pity us!  
We must go back with Policeman Day—  
Back from the City of Sleep.

Not good poetry, but touching in its revelation of his shrinking from the daytime, and in the pity for the poor and sick which as the fogleman of the herd he had to keep to himself. Like all divided natures he was frightened of life, and his best work was either in the expression of this terror, as in the mad visions of the tortured soldier in *The Man who would be King*, or an evocation of some world removed from ordinary existence, as in the Puck and Jungle books, or such a poem as *Mandalay*:

Ah, it's there that I would be  
By the old Moulmein pagoda  
Lookin' lazy at the sea.

As he shrank from understanding himself, he was unable to understand others. The characters in his stories are hardly more than puppets through whom Kipling ventriloquises the sentiments he thinks proper to their place in the social hierarchy. The Brushwood Boy keeps the Ten Commandments as he will later keep a butler, whereas people who drop their aitches, like the soldier Mulvaney and the self-made millionaire, Sir Andrew Gloster, are allowed some fun with women to sweeten their social degradation. Kipling's notion of illicit love, and its place in the scheme of

things, may be gathered from the consolatory remarks addressed by the ageing Sir Andrew to his wife:

An' a man must go with a woman, as you could not understand;  
But I never talked 'em secrets, I paid 'em out of hand.

. . . I'm sick of the hired women—I'll kiss my girl on her lips!  
I'll be content with my fountain, I'll drink from my own well,  
And the wife of my youth shall charm me—an' the rest can go  
to Hell!

Between the aitchless adulterers and the Brushwood Boy Kipling placed his Indian civilians, engineers and other public servants, whose clipped speech and mannered stoicism expressed that mixture of an atheistic Puritanism and the saloon bar which seemed to him the proper attitude towards the harshness of existence. He praised a realistic acceptance of life, celebrating 'The great God Dungara, the God of Things as They Are, Most Terrible, One-Eyed, Wearing the Red Elephant Tusk'; but a realist would have chosen a less odd-looking creature to embody reality. What Kipling in his heart felt about the God of Things as They Are, how bitterly he rebelled against a scheme of things in which he could see no purpose and no pity, comes out in the simplest and most moving of his stories, *Without Benefit of Clergy*. In this story an Indian civilian loses his Indian mistress and the child she had borne him, and as he rides back to his quarters he puts his hand before his eyes and mutters, 'Oh, you brute! You utter brute!'

This fear and loathing of the unknown power which tormented men was the reverse side of Kipling's delight in cruelty inflicted by hardier persons than himself. When he was a child, his parents on leaving for India placed him in the charge of a woman who, together with her son, made his life wretched for some years. This time is movingly described in his autobiography, and is doubtless reflected in the stories where children are protected from some menace by a dauntless champion, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, the mongoose, who saves the small English boy from the cobra and his wife, or the she-wolf who intimidates Mowgli's enemy, the tiger. The Lama in *Kim* also embodies Kipling's revulsion from the cruelty of life, though less effectively. A woolly old man, who bears the same relation to Buddha as the Vicar of Wakefield to Christ, he has one moment of intense feeling. A native veteran is



recounting how he remained loyal to the English during the Mutiny, encouraged by an officer who said to him, 'Be content. There is great work forward. When this madness is over, there is a recompense.' 'Ay,' the lama mutters half to himself, 'there is a recompense when the madness is over, surely.'

Kipling did not profit from these moments of insight. His experiences in South Africa, where he saw something of war for the first time, deepened his feeling against life, but he drew from them no more illuminating conclusion than:

'We have had an Imperial lesson; it may make us an Empire yet.'

In the years that followed he wrote about children and fairies, instead of about the day's work and the seven seas, and though the imperial dream still haunted him, he preferred it softened by distance, picturing Roman or Norman imperialists instead of the contemporary type, and substituting Sir Richard Dalyngridge, one of William the Conqueror's knights, for the Brushwood Boy.

What was best in his character expressed itself in the care and pains he expended on his work. His life was disciplined, and there is a touch of greatness in his lines when the Great War broke out:

No easy hopes or lies  
Shall bring us to our goal,  
But iron sacrifice  
Of body, will, and soul.

But he could not keep on this level, he had too much of the hatred generated by fear, and the cruelty of inward despair. During the war a rumour spread that the Kaiser had cancer of the throat, and Kipling wrote a poem beginning:

'This is the State above the Law.  
The State exists for the State alone.'  
(*This is a gland at the back of the jaw,  
And an answering lump by the collar-bone.*)

After the war, during the Armistice, he wrote:

These were our children who died for our lands: they were dear  
in our sight.

We have only the memory left of their home-treasured sayings  
and laughter.

The price of our loss shall be paid to our hands, not another's hereafter.

Neither the Alien nor Priest shall decide on it. That is our right.

But who shall restore us our children?

The death of his son in the war gave its intensity of regret and ferocity to this poem, which epitomizes the unreconciled contradictions in his nature. Sunk in his own bitterness, he was unable to see the connection between his son's death and the enthusiasm for his writings of the Kaiser, who kept a copy of 'If' framed above his desk. 'We but teach Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return to plague the inventor.'

The kind of emotionalism about the Empire which gave Kipling his triumph was cooling before the Great War and extinct after it. From time to time Kipling took down the old trumpet and blew a few notes at the sound of which ageing readers of the *Morning Post* momentarily remembered their youth. But there was no throb or glow any more in his limping bitterness. How faint was the impulse behind these strains may be inferred from a note in the diaries of John Bailey, under the date March 27, 1919: 'Dined at the Club. Kipling told us that he had been struck with the number of Colonial soldiers who felt that they had been for the first time in a world which was full of life, of incidents, of variety, of memories of art and history—and who felt that they would never again be able to stay content in Australia or Canada, with nothing great in them but space.'

These sentiments did not lead Kipling to revise his youthful gospel, for to the last he kept self-examination at bay. Not long before his death he wrote a short story in which he repeated through Shakespeare's mouth the philosophy of life formerly expressed through Dick Heldar. The story shows Shakespeare working on a passage in Isaiah, sent him for revision by one of the translators of the Authorized Version. Ben Jonson is with him in his orchard, and they talk together, Jonson full of his grievances and his art, Shakespeare genially contemptuous of both. He was not yet ass enough, he said, to hawk up his private spites before the groundlings, who 'pay their penny for pleasure'. His own works were written without any reference to his own feelings. *King Lear* was clapped up as a vomit for Burbage when 'poor Dick was at odds with the world in general and womenkind in

special'. The emetic having done its work, 'I served him my *Macbeth* to toughen him'. The clergyman he is helping with Isaiah, Shakespeare says, was moved by some lines in *Macbeth*, seeing in them a parable of himself "going down darkling to his tomb, 'twixt cliffs of ice and iron." Jonson, struck by this phrase of Kipling's, says he knows nothing by Shakespeare of that quality, and Shakespeare replies that the clergyman may have been referring to some lines beginning 'To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow.'

Lear is divided between power and love, and at the end turns away from power—'No, no, no, no! come, let's away to prison'. Macbeth, the prototype of all who expect satisfaction from the domination of others, is suffocated at last in the vacuum of a life drained of its essence. The discomfort verging on disgust with which Lear affected Kipling illumines the limitations which helped his early triumph, the cliffs of ice and iron, echoing Macbeth's final soliloquy, reveal his later despair.

## SELECTED NOTICES

*Poltergeists*, by Sacheverell Sitwell. Faber & Faber, 15s.

To judge from the newspapers, poltergeists appear fairly frequently but seldom get a thorough investigation, because they will not, as a rule, 'perform' in the presence of strangers. But there are quite enough authenticated cases—Mr. Sitwell gives detailed accounts of four of the best-known, but there is a number of others—to suggest that the poltergeist is not imaginary in the ordinary sense of the word.

These cases are almost always very much alike. They consist of a series of evil-minded and frightening practical jokes, often with an undercurrent of obscenity. Crockery is smashed, objects fly through the air in an inexplicable manner, there are rapping noises and sometimes tremendous explosions and the violent ringing of bells. Sometimes, also, there are mysterious voices and apparitions of animals. In nearly, though not quite all, cases, there is in the house some young person, usually a girl about the age of puberty, who can be identified as the medium. As a

rule she is ultimately caught and admits that she has been playing tricks, after which the phenomena cease. But the thing is not so simple as this makes it appear. To begin with, there are cases in which no conscious fraud appears to exist, and others in which the medium only seems to have resorted to deliberate trickery after his or her 'genuine' powers had begun to wane. But the most striking fact of all is that even when the mediums are consciously cheating they seem to acquire powers that they would not normally have. At the least they become accomplished conjurors. The mysterious voices, for instance, are obviously due to ventriloquism, which is not much easier to learn than walking the tightrope. In a few cases the disturbances have continued for years on end without any human agent being caught in the act.

As with spiritualistic phenomena, three explanations are possible. One is 'spirits', one is hypnotism and hallucination, and another is vulgar fraud. Few sensible people would accept the first, and there is a good deal of evidence for the third. Houdini, for instance, was fond of demonstrating that all spiritualist 'manifestations' can be faked; some of the details are given in his biography. Mr. Sitwell takes it for granted that all poltergeist phenomena are due to human trickery, conscious and unconscious, but, as he points out, it is just there that the interest begins. Ghosts are completely uninteresting, but the aberrations of the human mind are not. In the case of the poltergeist you have an aberration by which one member of a family is impelled to play terrifying tricks on the others, and to show diabolical secretiveness and cunning in doing so. Why they do it, what pleasure they get out of it, is completely unknown. There is possibly a clue in the fact that the same phenomena recur in cases that are centuries apart. If one takes the view that the poltergeist disturbances never actually happen, that the whole thing is simply a pack of lies, then one is faced by an even stranger psychological puzzle—that of whole households suffering collective hallucination or conspiring together to tell stories that are bound to get them laughed at.

Mr. Sitwell links the subject up with sexual hysteria on the one hand, and on the other with witchcraft, in which hallucination was mixed up with the remains of a pre-Christian fertility-worship. The famous Sabbaths at which the witches had sexual

intercourse with the Devil were presumably dreams induced by auto-suggestion and drugs. According to Mr. Sitwell, the ointment with which they rubbed themselves before mounting their broomsticks is now known to have contained drugs which would give a sleeping person the sensation of flying. It was only recently that witchcraft could be seriously studied, because it was only recently that the 'supernatural' explanation of it could be finally rejected. So also with the poltergeist, so long accepted as a real ghost or laughed at as an old wives' story. It is probably neither, but a rare and interesting form of insanity. When it has been further studied it will probably, like spiritualism, teach us a little more about hallucination and group-psychology.

GEORGE ORWELL

THE War, according to the Exhibition of 'British War Artists' now on view in the National Gallery, is—if a verbal contradiction be permitted—a most peaceful affair. It is well ordered, unhurried and mathematical in its precision, but it contains none of the bitterness, brutality and tragedy that this war has brought, in an even greater measure than any other struggle of the past. All the pictures have been painted without emotion, and therefore it is without any deep emotion that we look at them.

The exhibition may be considered a success if the reasons which prompted it are overlooked, for it is certainly enjoyable and most of the artists are on top of their form. But if it is meant to depict War with all its horrors and tragedies, then it fails, for apart from the strange appearance of the barrage balloons, the sandbags in the streets and the khaki uniforms, nobody would guess that anything was amiss. These outward signs are only superficial: spiritually the Exhibition skims the surface, and for this reason it will fail to satisfy the more searching observer. Our best plan, therefore, would be to wander around the two Galleries enjoying the show for what it gives, rather than decrying it for what it fails to give.

Let us look at John Nash and Eric Ravilious. They both live up to their high standard of static design, the former being particularly successful in 'Refitting a Cruiser' and 'Scrap'.

Ravilious' 'Light Vessel and Duty Boat', 'Leaving Scapa Flow', and 'Ship's Screw on a Truck', are all beautifully composed and delightful in colour. In the last named the footprints in the snow have been turned into a charming pattern. His 'actions', on the other hand, do not strike home, the intensity of gunfire and the drama of the sinking ship being evidently beyond his powers. I think one is rather tired of hearing how closely Ardizzone resembles Rowlandson. Certainly he is drawn towards similar situations and enjoys the same kind of fun, but Ardizzone is an artist with great individuality and a keenly satirical eye. 'On the Road to Louvain' and 'The Bombing of G.H.Q. Boulogne' are visually excellent, but if they are intended to stir the emotions they fail, they are certainly not very moving. But his little dry comments 'With the 300th on the Move' and 'Firing on the Ranges' are as good as they can be, while there are some lovely fragments of drawing in 'A Priest begging for a Lift, Louvain'. Edward Bawden seems to be very much out of his sphere. 'Dunkerque, Embarkation of the Wounded, May 1940', and 'The Quay at Dunkerque', have a certain atmosphere of stark reality and desolation, but they are loose in their drawing and uncomfortable in their composition.

Barnett Freedman's best are the two water-colours, 'Runaway at Thelus during construction by the 698 Co. R.E. Air Component South', Nos. 1 and 2, while Cundall's 'Return of H.M.S. Exeter' comes up to the standard we have learnt to expect from this artist. It was a happy idea to have Raymond McGrath recording aeroplane factories: his architectural draughtsmanship is well suited to such subjects, although I do not always like his colour. For this reason 'Fitters working on a Spitfire' and 'Bombers' Main Plane under Construction' are the ones I like best. Sir Muirhead Bone's drawings are, as usual, most skilful and finely executed, while the subject of Ginner's poster, 'Building a Battleship', is admirably suited to his cold meticulous technique. Perhaps it would not be out of place here to say how much we are looking forward to seeing Paul Nash's war work. He has been most excellently 'cast' as an official artist to the Air Ministry and one may safely expect some great results.

Pitchforth has treated his 'A.F.S. Men practising with a large pump on the banks of the Serpentine' with the necessary realism and yet has retained a lyrical quality. The trees showing through



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the misty haze of the falling water have a poetic quality, and their ethereal fragility is beautifully contrasted with the tremendous weight of the water as it forces its way through the pump. But I think the most satisfying picture in the Exhibition is Anthony Gross's 'Sandbags in Bethnal Green'. The sirens have just sounded, or a bomb has dropped near by, and it is not only the flutter of the birds or the running of the children that suggests this: it is the whole atmosphere, which is permeated with foreboding and the sense that something unnatural is about to happen. And this is not his only good work in the Exhibition, all Gross's pen and wash drawings are lively and interesting, especially the 'Recruit' series, which should prove most valuable as propaganda.

About the portraits there is not much to be said, excepting that they are poor. Henry Lamb's drawings are easily the best. Kennington's pastels would have been much more acceptable had they not been over life-size. I find them over-modelled and in many cases too dramatic, and their 'largeness' emphasises these faults. Reginald Eves's portraits lack backbone and are 'wishy-washy' in colour, and as under the circumstances there must be many men of fine physique and determined character who would be available as models, one cannot help regretting that the portrait painters have not made better use of their opportunities.

As this Exhibition represents only the first series of War pictures to be shown to the public, let us hope that in subsequent ones the painters will make good the deficiencies about which we have spoken; that they will reveal powers of which, perhaps, they themselves have not dreamed, and that they will realize in paint more and more fully the immensity of the struggle in which we all have the honour to be playing individual parts.

LILLIAN BROWSE

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